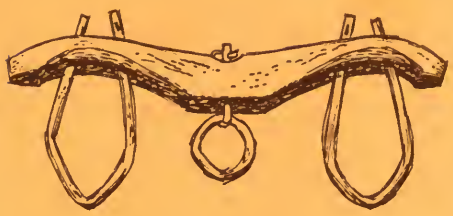
UNCLE JOE'S LINCOLN

EDWARD A. STEINER

LINCOLN ROOM



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By EDWARD A. STEINER

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There came into the yard a strangely pathetic figure.

Uncle Joe's Lincoln

By

EDWARD A. STEINER

Author of "Introducing the American Spirit," "On the Trail of the Immigrant"

New York *Chicago*

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This book is dedicated to my boyhood's friend

Jacob Mandl

who in these troubled days is serving his adopted country efficiently and modestly and who though he has remained poor has made others rich by his upright and unselfish life

FOREWORD

TO Mr. Walter P. McGuire, of the *American Boy Magazine*, I am indebted for the suggestion that I rewrite and enlarge my little sketch, "Abraham Lincoln in Hungary," which appeared in my book, "Against the Current," published in 1910.

In doing this, new incidents were recalled, and "Uncle Joe's Lincoln" is the result.

What gave me the greatest joy in writing it, was that it afforded me the opportunity of bearing witness to the patriotism of our foreign-born citizens, who in this period of national stress have not failed in loyalty and devotion to their adopted country.

It is a matter of pride to see their names on the Honor Roll of the nation, paying in part at least, the debt we, the alien born, owe to our United States.

E. A. S.

Grinnell College.

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I

In which the Three-Quarters of a Man Forgives as He Was Once Forgiven

WE were playing soldiers in our yard. It was not easy to march over the rough cobblestones with which the yard was paved, and maneuvers could not be very extensive, for we were shut in on three sides by huge brick walls which separated us from our neighbors. On the fourth side was the orchard, which extended to the river, and was zealously guarded by a fierce-looking and merciless old Hungarian, whose name was Istvan.

He wore wide, linen trousers which looked like a divided skirt, a blue waistcoat, and over that a sheepskin coat. He usually walked very softly, ready to catch any culprit who might have gone into his orchard; but his sheepskin coat was old and smelled

so badly that it always betrayed his coming.

He had a dog to help him—a kindly, old, hunting dog who had served his day chasing rabbits and was now to chase less nimble apple thieves.

Istvan carried a gun, which was supposed to be loaded with salt, and we were mightily afraid of it, though no living man or woman had ever heard it go off. That may have been due to the fact that no boy ever dared enter the orchard uninvited, and there were but few invitations.

The self-appointed General of our army of six soldiers was Yanczy Pal—and the fact that he is now, if he is still alive, a captain in the Austrian army, may prove the theory that commanders are not made, but born.

He was the only boy in a real uniform. He boasted of many ancestors who were soldiers, and he wore those parts of their wonderful equipments which the moths had spared. Inasmuch as they lived before wise men had learned from stupid animals to pro-

tect themselves against their enemies by what naturalists call "protective coloring"—that is before our soldiers wore khaki—he was most gloriously attired.

He wore the *czako* (helmet) of a Hussar, the red coat of an artillery officer and the tightly fitting trousers of the infantry. The trousers fitted as closely as tights and were sky blue. Yanczy Pal was tall for his years; but I often wonder how a man ever wore those trousers. He told us that his uncle, who was a great general, was so thoroughly a soldier that he had a nightgown made of army cloth, and wore all his crosses and medals to bed.

Yanczy also carried a sword—a cavalry sword, and it was so long that he had to wear it over his shoulder like a gun. None of the rest of the army could boast of heroic soldier ancestors who wore brass buttons and braid on their nightgowns; so four of the common soldiers (they were all common soldiers except Yanczy Pal and myself) wore their civilian clothes—very civilian indeed. They were one-piece suits buttoning in the

back, and we had used three cents' worth of gilt paper to give them a military aspect. The three cents had been contributed by me, and because of that I received a commission and became Quartermaster General. As the gilt glory did not last longer than one campaign, I was frequently called upon to finance the army.

My own uniform, while not altogether military, was, to me at least, the real thing. I wore brass buttons, each one of them stamped with an eagle. They were put through the cloth of my coat and fastened by a nail. My hat was ornamented by a greasy-looking black string, to which were attached two buttons which looked like acorns. Had you seen me you might not have recognized in me a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, but that is exactly what I tried to resemble. You may well wonder why a little boy way off in Hungary, in the foot-hills of the Carpathians, had so strange a notion; but "that is another story," and, before I finish, I hope you will know the reason.

Anyway we were drilling, and I think that the General purposely directed all our maneuvers toward the orchard, in which the apples were temptingly green; and while, like real soldiers, it was not "ours to reason why, ours but to do or die," we hoped that after the army was licked into shape we might invade the orchard.

As I have said, the army was being drilled in our yard, and the General made a greater racket than ever, with his "*Habt acht*," which means "Attention!" That we could easily give him, but when it came to the command of "*Rechts um*," and "*Links um*," our response was neither quick nor unanimous, for a boy's right side and left side seem to him very much the same, and the General did that which of course is the duty of every general to do under similar circumstances. He called us a pack of jackasses, and other more or less complimentary names. He even swore at us, and, as the printer who sets this type will not know this swearword, and need not use dashes to show how much he is shocked, I

will write it down. This is what he said, "*Basama Teremtete!*"

He said it more than once, and when he followed that with something even worse, his army then and there mutinied. He then unbuckled his sword, which he had to hold with both hands, and told us that his uncle once cut off the heads of a whole regiment for resisting a commanding officer; that he would now, as always, follow his illustrious ancestor's example; and that, while he might spare our heads, the raid upon the orchard would be indefinitely postponed, unless we apologized immediately.

While the racket was at its height, there came into the yard a strangely pathetic figure, a man who hobbled across the cobblestones with great effort. He wore a faded suit of blue; one trouser leg was superfluous for there was no leg in it, and one sleeve was also empty. The brass buttons which were once a part of his coat adorned my uniform, and the soft, slouch hat he wore was minus its braid, for that too he had

given me to aid in my soldier-like appearance.

He was a rather untidy man with his face covered by a heavy beard, he had a harsh, hoarse voice and he shook his fist at us in a threatening way because we had disturbed his afternoon nap. The entire disorganized army was ready to run; but retreat was impossible, as the only way out was blocked by the man in blue; around us were the three walls, and at the other end of the garden were Istvan, the dog, and the gun loaded with mythical salt.

"Uncle Joe," who was not anybody's uncle, chose that name for himself when, after many years in the United States, he returned to Hungary to die in his native country, after fate had denied him that privilege while he fought for the Union. He had a generous pension, most of which he spent for drink. When he returned to his home town, from which no one had missed him, though he had been away more than a quarter of a century, I was the only one to greet him.

Even that was an accident, for I played truant and did not go to the service that particular Sabbath. I was on the market-place waiting for the omnibus, to see who would unload himself from its mysterious depths. It was very exciting to see who was coming to us from the far unknown, as it was our only means of communication with the outside world; for not only did we have no railroad, we hadn't even a newspaper, which would tell us once or twice a week who had come or who was going away.

When I asked the omnibus driver how many passengers he had brought, he laughed and said: "Three-quarters of a man"; which puzzled me greatly until I saw the old soldier alight. Knowing that my dear mother never turned a stranger from her door, I took him home, and so it happened that this veteran of the Civil War, who had left an arm and a leg on some battle-field in the United States, was living in a back room in our house. That is how I came to wear Uncle Sam's brass buttons, and to want to look like a member of the G. A. R.

However, Uncle Joe brought me much more than brass buttons; he enlarged my world by adding to it a new continent, and he taught me a wonderful chapter of history. Many and many a long winter's evening I sat in his room, while by the light of a tallow candle he read to me about the Civil War, using sulphur matches to show me the position of the different armies. The matches with heads on them were Union soldiers, and those without heads were soldiers of the Confederacy. This method of teaching history consumed so many of my mother's matches that once she asked me whether Uncle Joe ate them.

I also learned the names of the great generals and, while some of them were difficult for me to pronounce, I remember them all; and even now when I mention them, I can hear Uncle Joe telling me that in English you write a name one way and pronounce it quite differently, which seemed to me rather foolish, and on that point I have not changed my opinion.

There was one name which gave me no

trouble, for it was pronounced as it was spelled, and when Uncle Joe spoke of that man it was with deepest reverence. He had his picture in his room. It hung over his bed, and around it were draped the Stars and Stripes, which even then I thought the most beautiful flag in existence.

To me the pictured face seemed infinitely more noble than those of the proud kings who ruled over us. It was a sad face; at least one side of it seemed sad, while the other side wore a smile, as if he meant to say "Life is never all sadness, but neither is it all a joke."

Under his bushy black hair, upon his broad forehead, were many wrinkles, and they looked as if they had been worn into it by a great sorrow. His eyes, set deep in his thin, muscular face, looked honest and keen, and I was sure that one could not easily tell a lie to such a man, for he could look right into one's heart. His nose was large and so was his mouth, and I knew that he must be generous.

On the whole it was not a handsome face,

not half so handsome as that of our king. Evidently God took plenty of time to make a king. He did not need him especially. But in a country's great crisis, the Master Workman had taken the common clay and shaped it quickly and breathed into it as much of His spirit as it would hold, and named it—*Abraham Lincoln.* At any rate, Uncle Joe thought he was the most wonderful man who ever lived, and the more I learned about him, the more I shared that opinion.

When Uncle Joe appeared on the scene that day in the garden, and the General who had threatened his mutinous army was ready to run, and his soldiers with him, I, knowing that his bark was worse than his bite, said: "Oh, Uncle Joe, tell us, do you think that if Abraham Lincoln had called us jackasses and said '*Basama Teremtete*' and we objected to being '*basamad*,' that he would have had our heads cut off?"

I knew that when you appealed to Uncle Joe in the name of Abraham Lincoln, it was indeed like pouring oil upon troubled

waters, and I was not mistaken. Forgetting that we had disturbed his afternoon nap, he soon had us lined up, General, Quartermaster General, and all, and we were drilling to new words of command.

It was no more "*Habt acht*" and "*Rechts um*," "*Links um*"; it was "Attention!" "Right 'bout face!" "Left 'bout face!" At least that is the way it sounded, and when we did not know which was right or left, he tied a handkerchief on the side with which we were not to be on speaking terms, and he called it the "Blow your nose side."

When we had finally mastered the intricacies of right and left, he made us march around the yard to the tune of Yankee Doodle. He first whistled it, and no doubt it brought memories of his campaigns, for then he began to hum it; and before he knew it, he was singing it, and we heard those strange words at whose meaning we could but vainly guess. When we asked for a translation, he permitted us to be at rest, and, leaning against the wall, began:

"Yankees are the people who live in the

northern part of the United States, and the people of these states didn't want the people of the Southern States to keep the slaves. Boys, do you think it is right to keep slaves?" We replied in unison, "No, sir!" "That's right," he said, "that's what the Yankees thought; but the people of the Southern States said: 'If you won't let us keep our slaves we will fight you,' and those *Basama Teremtete* rebels began to shoot at the Yankees.

"I was then living in St. Louis, by the big Mississippi River, the biggest river in the whole world." You see Uncle Joe was something of an American, not only in his love for the right and his willingness to fight for it, but also in his way of thinking that everything in the United States is the biggest. "And so," he continued, "I enlisted and became a Yankee."

"But what does 'doodle' mean?" I was emboldened to ask, for Uncle Joe was beginning to tell all about the war, which I had heard ever so many times.

"Oh, 'doodle,' well, hm! well—that is just

doodle. It *means* doodle. You see when we marched, we had some one play the fife, and that was the doodle, and when we saw the rebels—well, we just doodled and doodled, and at Vicksburg, you see, we went to town; we just took the town, and that is 'Yankee Doodle went to town.' Town means city," and wishing to escape further examination about Yankee Doodle, he was about to call his army into action, when I asked him another question.

"What is macaroni, Uncle Joe?"

"Oh, you muddle-headed ignoramus you, don't you know what macaroni is? It's—well, it is something good to eat. It's what we got to eat when we took the town," and we were summarily brought to order, and once more marched toward the orchard to the tune of Yankee Doodle.

He hobbled along ahead of us, and, when we came to the closed gate, he evidently thought he was with Sherman on his march to the sea, for he began to sing another song to a livelier and better tune, which ended like this: "While we go marching through

Georgia." To a victorious army there are no obstacles, not even closed garden gates. He lifted the latch, and triumphantly the army entered the protected domain of old Istvan.

As luck would have it, neither Istvan nor his dog was visible, and hardly had we come under the shade of the apple trees when the army, without so much as "by your leave," broke ranks and began filling its pockets with green apples—that is, those of us who had pockets big enough. Our General, Yanczy Pal, had such tight trousers that no apple, no matter how small, could be put into the pockets, and those on his coat were sewed up with gold braid. My pockets were ample. I stuffed them as full as I could and I committed a great *camouflage*. I put my pocket handkerchief on top of them leaving one end hanging out as convincing evidence.

Ahead of us Uncle Joe still hobbled, to the tune of "Marching Through Georgia," quite unconscious of our defection. When he came to the end of the garden where the

gate opened toward the river, he stopped, turned right about face as quickly as he could on one leg, and then he discovered that he was without his army.

We were still under the apple tree, for we were not satisfied with windfalls; we had shaken it, gently of course, and were busy putting away the surplus in our shirts or in any place where apples fitted, and it is marvellous how easily apples fit into a boy's clothes.

Uncle Joe came hobbling back. The General was nearest him in a very inviting posture, and he applied his crutch where the trousers fitted the tightest. The other boys ran as fast as their legs could carry them, and I, of course, with them. I couldn't run so fast as they, for my pockets being very ample and my shirt quite large, I was loaded down with apples. Running even as moderately as I did, I shed apples in all directions, much to my dismay.

That evening I did not as usual go voluntarily into Uncle Joe's room. My mother sent me in. I was in a very re-

pentant mood, for green apples taste best before you have eaten them, and both my conscience and my stomach troubled me. As soon as I entered the room, he took me by the ear, and he was never gentle with little boys' ears. He dragged me up to his bed, right in front of Abraham Lincoln's portrait: "Down on your knees, you little deserter!"

I fell on my knees as if I had been struck down. "Now ask that great man's pardon," cried Uncle Joe. "You were marching behind a Union soldier, and you basely deserted and stole! Yes, sir, you stole apples! You're not fit to ask his pardon, do you hear?" he shrieked, half crying, "You're not fit, sir! You are not fit!"

Then I began to cry, moved as much by the anguish in his voice as by my inner pangs. He, too, began to cry, not as a little boy cries, but in big sobs, as if something in him were breaking.

"You're not fit," he sobbed again, "not fit, just as I was not fit to ask his pardon." Then the tears came thick and fast as if that

which had broken in him were pouring its contents through his eyes. When we both were through crying we felt better. I never before knew that crying helped a boy's stomach-ache as well as his conscience. Then he took me on his lap and told me how it happened that he always fell down on his knees before Abraham Lincoln, and asked and received his pardon. I don't remember the names of places he mentioned; they sounded strange, and I could not pronounce them. I shall, however, try to tell the story just as he told it; for though it was a simple story it had a tremendous effect upon my whole life.

Uncle Joe looked for his handkerchief, and when he found it he wiped the tears from his cheeks, then blew his nose several blasts, and when he finally began to speak it was in big gulps, as if he had to swallow something before he spoke.

"You little rapscallion you, I am going to tell you something I have never told to anybody, and if you tell it to anybody while I am living I'll scalp you!" and he took my

"Now ask that great man's pardon," cried Uncle Joe.

shock of hair and pulled it till it hurt, and I solemnly promised I wouldn't tell the great secret he was about to entrust to me.

"When the war broke out," he began after my solemn pledge of secrecy, "I was living in St. Louis. Before that I had been sort of a drifter. I didn't amount to much here, and I didn't amount to much in America. 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks.' I was a good-for-nothing boy, I never became a much better man. Changing the climate may improve a man's health, but it doesn't always necessarily improve his character. Over there a man can do all sorts of things and fail ever so many times; but there is always a chance for him if he tries again. So I kept on, trying first one thing and then another.

"I worked on a farm, I taught school, I became an agent and sold many things to people who did not want them or did not need them. Then I worked on a boat and finally I landed in St. Louis. I came there without a cent of money, and I walked up from the levee into the town and began look-

ing for a job. I went into a German newspaper office and asked them to give me a copy of the paper for I didn't have money enough to pay for it, and they offered me a job as a helper in the printing office. It was hard work but I liked it. I was a great reader, and papers from all over the country came to our office; so I read during my spare time, getting something of an education that way. I finally became a printer and made good wages, but I squandered all the money I earned on drink."

Then he stopped and gulped again as if he were swallowing what he had to say, and when he finally spoke, his voice was harsh, as if he were angry with somebody. He pushed his hand roughly through my curly hair.

"Don't you ever drink, boy! I'd rather kill you now than to think that you would have to suffer what I suffered! I gambled," and he pulled my hair, "and finally I stole money," and again he gave my hair a vicious pull. I was hoping that he would not confess all his sins to me, for if he did

and pulled my hair every time, I wouldn't have a hair left. I knew his failings, and they were many.

"When the war finally came, the foreigners in St. Louis went with the Union and I went with them. I was a pretty tough fellow, and didn't think very much about the government, but I hated slavery. I didn't want anybody oppressed. I was always for the under dog, perhaps because I always was one myself. I loved Abraham Lincoln, our President. I loved him because he was once a poor man like myself, and had no education except what he got himself; so when I had a chance I enlisted, but I found soldiering pretty tough. I didn't like to do what somebody else told me, and anyway I know now that I was a coward. Don't you ever be a coward!" and again my hair was pulled.

"I—deserted!" He dropped me to the floor, and, as there was no soft carpet, I felt the hard boards very decidedly, and began to cry. "Sh!"—he said. "You little deserter! Stop your bellowing! Don't let any one ever hear what I told you! If you ever tell

I'll scalp you!" and I felt another tug at my badly dishevelled hair.

"I deserted! Don't you ever——" Before he had a chance to grasp my hair again and admonish me never to desert, I was at the door, ready to run; but the old man coaxed me back with a piece of rock candy, which he used rather freely in his struggle with a chronic case of bronchitis, and which was my reward for listening to his stories about the war. I did not make the mistake of letting him take me on his lap. I listened from a safe distance as he began to tell me more about his shortcomings.

"Yes, I deserted, and lived for a long time like a wild animal, sleeping out in the woods and living on whatever I could steal or beg. Don't you ever beg!" Fortunately I was beyond the reach of his hand, but he had to punish somebody at the remembrance of his misdeeds; so he pulled his beard every time he made a confession. It was pitiful to see it, but it was less painful to me.

"Finally I was caught and put into prison," he went on, "and that was a mighty good

thing for me. The very best thing for anybody, when he has done any wrong, is to be caught and properly punished. But it is one thing to be locked up and another thing to be told that, because you are a deserter, you will be shot. Oh, boy!" and then he pulled his beard so hard I was more than thankful that it wasn't my hair.

"My life, which I didn't value enough to keep myself decent, all at once seemed kind of a sacred thing. That which I had profaned, and stepped on, as if it were a nasty bug, became something like a small piece of God. I was a gambler and a drunkard, a thief and a deserter, but I wanted to live."

I thought his heart would break, for his breath seemed to have stopped, he grew purple in the face, and it was a great relief to hear him speak again.

"I wanted to live and there was just one man who could give me my life back again, and that man was Abraham Lincoln. I had cut his picture out of a newspaper, and fastened it onto the wall with some paste I made out of chewed-up bread, and I used to

kneel before that picture and pray as if I were praying to my God. You say your prayers, you little deserter?" He turned to me again, angrily. I nodded my head. "Yes, you say prayers as if you were grinding coffee for your mother, and with as much feeling! Oh, boy, I prayed as if I were tearing out my heart by the roots. I was praying for my life. I wanted another chance to live, and then when it came my time to die I wanted to die like a man, not like a dog.

"It was two days before I was to be shot, and I had given up all hope. I was lying on my cot and wanted to forget that I was alive, when the door opened and my jailer came in, and after him a tall, lean, lank man. He was so tall he had to bend nearly double to get through the door, and when he straightened himself out, I saw it was President Lincoln! If God Almighty had come down into that stinking jail, I wouldn't have been as scared as I was. Then he talked to me like any mother would have talked to me if she had found me a condemned deserter.

"I thought I would rather die than have

him talk to me that way. If he had said, 'You good-for-nothing rascal, it serves you right; that's what you get for deserting!' or if he had taken a stick and hit me with it, I could have stood it; but he looked into my eyes and he seemed to see my whole rotten insides, and I felt that I wanted to hide myself from that look. His voice was tender as a woman's, and I cried like a baby.

"Then the President saw the picture on the wall, and the jailer told him something, and I fell down on my knees and I held on to his bony legs till the jailer pulled me away. I acted like a raving maniac after he left me, and they had to tie me up. They were afraid I would brain myself against the hard stone wall of my cell.

"That night I didn't sleep at all. The next day an officer came to see me and I thought he came to take me out to be shot. He had a big envelope in his hand and it looked like the death warrant. When he began to read I stopped my ears. I didn't care then whether I was to be shot or not, but I didn't want to hear about it. In spite

of my having stopped my ears I could hear something; I caught one word, then after I took my fingers out of my ears, I heard that I was pardoned. Oh, boy, boy, do you know what that means? I was pardoned!" He reached toward me with his big stick uplifted, and, fearing that I had not shown the right kind of appreciation (but how could I, never having been condemned to death?), I ran from him, but he beckoned me, with a smile. Instead of hitting me with his stick, he embraced me and kissed me over and over again, and, considering that he had a frightfully bushy beard and didn't keep himself especially clean, I felt that I would have preferred his cane to his kisses.

"Oh, boy," and this time he availed himself of the chance to pull my hair again, "I went back to the army after a while, after a long while, for I had to stay in prison, and then I fought. Oh, boy, I fought! I didn't fight for the niggers or for the United States. I fought for President Lincoln, and I fought like a lion. This is how I fought!" He shook the limp trouser leg, "and this," and

he shook his empty sleeve. Then he looked up to the flag-draped picture. "You see, Abraham Lincoln, what you made out of a rascally deserter, you see, you see?" and he shook his limp trouser leg and his empty sleeve right into the face of Abraham Lincoln.

Before he let me go, he impressed me again and again with the enormity of my crime. I had deserted the army commanded by one of the soldiers of President Lincoln, I had stolen apples while I was a deserter, and I ought to be punished. While I deserved to be shot, he would be merciful; but I had to be punished and I was, both internally and externally. I had a sleepless night. The green apples looked after that, and the next day when the army drilled again in our cobblestone paved yard, I wore my usual uniform, but the brass buttons were missing, and my hat was minus the greasy braid with its buttons which looked like acorns.

II

Tells How the Lincoln Army Began the Celebration of the Fourth of July

UNCLE JOE'S advent awakened within us the martial spirit, asleep in our town since 1866, the year when the Prussians invaded it in their war with Austria, writing the history of the new Germany with the points of bayonets dipped in the blood of our fathers. The old soldier's stories of the victorious Union Army, his share in which was not minimized, stimulated our imaginations, and we resolved that ours was to be a Lincoln Army, and its task was to bring liberty to our little world, where it was so badly needed.

Our immediate duty was the celebration of the Fourth of July, and included a parade, a picnic and fireworks. It was to be a real holiday, and we were neither to fast before we feasted, nor pray before we played, which was the customary way of observing holi-

days; therefore we awaited its coming with unmixed joy.

We were used to parades in the form of religious processions; but picnics were as new to us as apples were to Adam before the Fall, and the nearest we had come to fireworks was some red light which Yanczy Pal had obtained somewhere, and which we lighted on his parents' historic mahogany table. What happened to us in consequence it is not necessary to chronicle.

According to Uncle Joe, the elements out of which a picnic should be constructed were sandwiches, lemonade and ice-cream. This ménu disturbed our imaginations more than it might have disturbed our digestions. The word Sandwich we found in our geography; but it seemed alien to our bill of fare, and we decided that it was composed of human flesh or something equally unpalatable.

Yanczy Pal, the wisest among us, told us that he had tasted lemonade when he had fever, and that he knew the elements from which it was made; but before the mystery of ice-cream even his brain reeled. It did

not help us to understand when Uncle Joe explained that "When the ice on the outside of the cream melted, the cream on the inside of the ice became ice, and so, the ice-cream." It remained one of the unbelievable American mysteries, and we accepted it as we accepted Uncle Joe's account of the battle of Gettysburg, or his description of Niagara Falls.

Unfortunately the realization of most of our hopes was to wait until we came to the United States; for while the old soldier was a brave man, he had brought with him from America an unconquered foe, who came upon him and vanquished him at regular periods—when his pension came from Uncle Sam. Then he would appear at the Black Eagle Inn, where among the well to do he would drink sweet Hungarian wine, and throw his money to the Hungarian Gypsies. When his money grew less, he went to Abraham Fuchs' dram-shop, where with common peasants and roaming Gypsies, he drank plain, white, biting vodka, till his last cent was gone. Then in a repentant mood he would beg my mother's pardon,

promising never to drink another drop, and keep his word until the next time the postman brought the well-known official envelope.

I remember how excited we were the day the fireworks came, and how my mother would not give the box house room for fear of an explosion. Finally, under cover of the night, Uncle Joe and I deposited it in the granary, we alone knowing its hiding-place.

We drilled every day. We marched and countermarched. We took the town by storm and retook it again and again. We sang Yankee Doodle and waved tiny flags of stars and stripes which Uncle Joe had made for us by the aid of colored paper, scissors and paste. It was to be no mere imitation of the American Fourth of July! We determined to make it a real Independence Day of our own, and while we could not overthrow the government, we resolved to shout the "Battle Cry of Freedom" when the fireworks bombarded the air.

Alas, for our hopes! The first of July marked a new quarter, and on that day Pan Fiala, the postman (who, by the way,

could not read, and was dependent on any one he met to decipher the addresses), brought the money from the United States; and Uncle Joe forgot that some twenty boys were wishing time to speed till the glorious, yet unknown, much anticipated Fourth of July should release the pent-up enthusiasm of a great Liberty Army, and reveal the mystery of sandwiches, the miracle of ice-cream and the glory of fireworks.

No doubt he meant to keep sober. I know he did; for he gave all the money he received to my mother, and he kept his resolution for five hours. He paced up and down his room from about eleven till four in the afternoon. He acted like a caged animal, and then, ashamed to ask for the money, he did that which was ever the refuge of tempted men; he told a lie.

He said he wanted some money to prepare for the picnic, and that evening he was at the Black Eagle Inn letting the picnic slide down his throat, and throwing Uncle Sam's dollars at the fiddling Gypsies.

On the third of July, following the usual

program, he was drinking vodka at Abraham Fuchs', and when the Fourth of July dawned we found Uncle Joe so drunk that he didn't know the difference between the anticipated day and Christmas. Had it not been for the determination of Yanczy Pal who, as I have said, was destined to be a leader of men, the day would have remained just a hot day in the seventh month instead of the more or less glorious and never-to-be-forgotten Fourth.

So it happened that General Yanczy Pal was reviewing the Lincoln Army.

Old horse pistols, dull bayonets and rusty swords displaced our wooden weapons, and a motley assortment of parts of uniforms took the place of the three cents' worth of gilt paper, which had to be so frequently renewed; while three times six soldiers passed in review before Yanczy Pal, our doughty General.

"Infantry forward!" he shouted; and ten stalwart boys advanced, led by their captain, Pavel Chorvat. His father, the blacksmith, was far famed for his strength and size. He could lift the heaviest sack of grain, throw the

most vicious horse, and boasted that his chest was once used for an anvil without any damage to his lungs. He could also drink more whisky than any man within many miles, and swear the fiercest oaths. His son promised to be a "chip of the old block," or a spark from the same anvil.

The infantry which Captain Pavel Chorvat commanded, was racially, religiously and socially representative of our much mixed, or rather, badly divided community: Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Magyars, Slovaks and two Gypsies.

The review of the infantry proving satisfactory, the General shouted again, "Cavalry forward!" and Armin Grünwald, son of the Jewish horse-dealer, led that branch of our army in review. They were all his father's stable-boys, and the only equipment they had which fitted them for the cavalry was a strong stable odor. The captain was a tall, raw-boned lad, and because his face was as speckled as one of his father's horses, we called him "Speckled Horse." His special fame among us rested upon the fact that he

never ate rye bread. He said it made him sick at his stomach.

"Artillery forward!" the General again commanded, and Stephen Potoczck, the sole representative of that branch of the army, passed in review. He was assigned to the artillery, or the artillery was assigned to him, because he was the largest boy among us, fat rather than tall, and had the reputation of being able to consume more dumplings than any boy in the village. They were so large and hard that they resembled cannonballs, and as "Cannonball" he was enscribed in the archives of the Lincoln Army.

"Commissary Department forward!" And I passed before the scrutinizing gaze of the General. I carried a jar of dill pickles, a loaf of freshly baked bread and a big lump of sugar, all borrowed from my mother's pantry.

The review was eminently satisfactory in view of the fact that the long anticipated sandwiches, lemonade and ice-cream which Uncle Joe was to provide, had all been consumed by him in the form of Hungarian wine and vodka.

One boy still remained in the ranks, unrecognized and unreviewed. He was Rudolph, a lame boy, the son of a poor, Jewish peddler. Although he had a fighting soul, he was a cripple. He limped before the General, took off his cap in unmilitary and humble fashion, and, in his peculiar, sad drawl, said: "Mr. General, what will I be?"

"You," replied the General, after his behelmeted head had sunk in deep meditation upon his breast. "You," he replied with a haughty sneer, "will be the veterans."

"Veterans," Rudolph asked, encouraged by the high-sounding word, "and what do they do?"

"Veterans are the cripples who are no earthly good in the army," was the reply.

The poor boy's face grew red, then pale; his big lower lip quivered as if he were saying something to himself which he dare not say aloud, and he stepped back into the ranks followed by the laughter of the whole, cruel army.

After the review the General gave us our marching orders. Our object was the Rus-

sian Hill which was to be taken by storm. We were to march down the *Kunovszka Ulitza* (main street), past the court-house, through the narrow lane which led to the creek, and also served as an open sewer, and then in gallop up the Hill.

The marching orders were carried out. We passed by the court-house, and the seat of the government of our district, cruel and corrupt though it knew itself to be, did not tremble. The gendarmes who kept guard did not notice us, though we defiantly whistled Yankee Doodle and waved the flag of the American Republic. We crossed the *pottock* (creek) without mishap, and clambered up the Russian Hill at a gallop, leaving the General and Rudolph in the rear.

We never knew just how it happened, but as we looked back we saw the General with Rudolph on top of him, scratching, biting, and beating him. Tearing his uniform, and snatching his sword from under him, he threw it down the Hill, then he himself rolled down its grassy slope, and when he had reached a safe distance, he shouted at us a

derisive good-bye, accompanied by a well-known gesture in which both his outstretched hands and his nose had a part.

The General finally reached us minus his sword, a few inches of gold braid and several brass buttons. His hands and face were badly scratched and bleeding, he was crying, and his nose needed wiping. He was indeed a defeated General, defeated by a veteran who was "no earthly good in an army."

Without being ordered by my superior officer, I sent the cavalry down the Hill to capture the lame boy and recover the General's sword. Then I applied "First Aid" by lending the General my handkerchief. The cavalry returned without the deserter and desecrater of the head of our army, but did bring the sword, and with the return of the symbol of his power, he again took command, and the Russian Hill at the edge of our town resumed historic importance after fifty years or more of obscurity. It became the center of our celebration, and might well have been rebaptized, Liberty Hill.

III

Tells How it Ended in a Miracle

"HILLS are good for slidin' down on" is the boy's view of the use of a hill, and he is right. That is just what the Russian Hill had been used for by several generations of boys, and they never knew or cared to know that it had a history. We, I mean the boys of my generation, discovered its historic importance. Every discoverer, however, follows the path marked out for him by those who were within sight of the promised land and did not enter it, like the great prophet and lawgiver, Moses.

The boys who slid down that Russian Hill before us wore it smoother and smoother, so that we finally followed in the groove upon which they had worn out certain parts of their trousers. Our inheritance was a track as smooth and white as if it had been made

of ivory, and when our impress had for a long time been made upon it, particles of the white substance became dislodged, and we found them to be bones; small bones at first —fingers and teeth; then larger ones, such as arms and thigh bones. They were unmistakably human remains. This was indeed a discovery, which gave us all the thrills that an army in the making needed.

Of course we had dug a cave in its side. Every boy at one time or another has dug a cave; I suppose because ages and ages ago his ancestors had to live in caves, and the first thing a boy learned to do was to dig or help dig for a place in which to live. It sort of got into his blood, and now he has to do it. It is rare, however, that the average boy who plays soldier, or brigand, has such a cave as we dug for ourselves into the side of Russian Hill. The first few spadefuls yielded nothing but small human bones, then we struck steel, and a rusty gun, which none of us dared touch for fear it would go off. We were not afraid of the small silver and large copper coins which our cave yielded us, but

we were frightened to death when we struck our first skull.

The whole army was on the run except Yanczy Pal. His brave ancestors, who had turned many a good head into just such a skull, had bequeathed him their courage. He did not flinch when a little later we unearthed a whole skeleton, and with the aid of Pavel Chorvat who, being a blacksmith's son, was also made of fairly stern stuff, made the skeleton rather presentable by binding it together with strong wire.

Now we not only had a cave, but we had a big secret, and such a secret! A real skeleton of our own!

Uncle Joe told us that in America secret societies used skeletons in their initiations, and so every boy who joined our army was initiated by having the gruesome thing flashed at him when he entered the cave; then with his hand touching the skull he had to take an oath that he would not betray us, on penalty of his life.

After the inglorious interruption caused by the temporary defeat of Yanczy Pal, the next

item on the program was in order: namely, the picnic; but instead of the mysterious sandwiches, and the unbelievable ice-cream, we had to content ourselves with dill pickles and water which we drew from a near-by well. To this we added sugar and some artificial coloring; for we were told by Uncle Joe that the really patriotic lemonade was generously tinted.

After we had disposed of these delectable refreshments we made speeches, indulging in the repetition of big words, such as The Union, Freedom, and Democracy; words which we had caught from Uncle Joe, and which we understood about as well as many older people to whom they were not so new. Our oratorical passion being satisfied, we planned for the burning of the fireworks, the only tangible contribution made by Uncle Joe to our celebration.

It was decided that I was to bring the box, which no one but myself had as yet seen, to the market-place. Yanczy Pal, being a good Roman Catholic, decreed that to be perfectly safe the fireworks must be set off

under the protection of the statue of St. Florian, who was the heavenly guardian against fire. When the rockets had done their worst in frightening the people, especially the minions of the law, we were to rush through the streets proclaiming freedom for the Slovaks, who were in greatest need of liberation, being the poorest and most oppressed of our population.

Before we left for our homes to await the darkness, each member was again sworn to a secrecy which it was difficult to keep; for the secret was so big that it threatened to leak from such small vessels as we were. Moreover, we all smelled of the cave, having lingered in it much longer than usual; furthermore, dill pickles and artificially colored water, drawn from a long-neglected and tainted well, were playing havoc with our stomachs.

When I reached home, my dog came running out to greet me as usual, but after the first embrace he dropped his tail between his legs, stuck his snout into the ground and dug and dug as if he were burying some-

thing. Not being able to get rid of the disagreeable odor that way, he looked at me reproachfully as if to say: "Where under the sun have you gathered up so much bad smell?"

My sister asked no questions when she met me at the door. She closed it in my face and I went to the kitchen. There, our cook told me that I smelled exactly like the ghost which she once met at midnight, who told her that he was a tormented soul escaped from Hell. Then she ran to her room and brought back a bottle of holy water with which she sprinkled me. When that was of no avail she very roughly took me by the nape of my neck and pushed me out into the wood-shed. I was not sorry to be alone, for things were happening to me which one does not care to have happen in public. The dill pickles and the tainted water became very obtrusive, and I had a solemn hour of it, first fearing I was going to die and then as I grew still worse, hoping I should die; for life just then was a frightful torture. Long before the sun had set I was

found, made to undress in the wood-shed, hustled to my room and put to bed.

Eight o'clock came. Minus my clothing I lay between two feather beds, with the zenith of the Fourth of July celebration approaching. Of course I had to be there, being the only one who knew where the fireworks were; so in spite of the fact that I felt as sick as a boy is capable of feeling when his digestive apparatus is in active revolution, I crept stealthily out. After assuring myself that Uncle Joe was still in the twilight zone between drunkenness and sobriety, and that no aid could be expected from him, I went to the granary and dug the box of fireworks out of the grain. I carried it to the market-place and to the sheltering shadow of St. Florian who, with his bucket carved in stone, stood ready to protect the town from its impending doom. Less than half our army had gathered. All looked pale and seemed in no mood for liberating anybody.

Cannonball was absent, so our whole artillery was out of commission. The cavalry, too, was minus its Jewish captain—only the

Gypsy boys had come, for they were used to bad smells, and their stomachs being copper lined were proof against anything.

Yanczy Pal, our brave General, was present, and Pavel Chorvat, who had drunk worse things than tainted sugar water, also appeared. There were enough of us to set off the fireworks although there were too few of us to strike terror to the hearts of the oppressors.

The night watchman was making his first round. He carried a wooden horn, and a long, old-fashioned halibard was his weapon. He tooted the hours from nine till four, solemnly warning all sinners, thieves and robbers to get out of his way, and they usually did. We waited till we but faintly heard him at the other end of the *Kunovszka Ulitza*. We heard him sing his pious song committing the people to the care of the heavenly powers.

> " The night has come to weary men,
> To rest the tired Christian ;
> To Lutherans, Gypsies and to Jews,
> I bring this blessed Christian news.

If you are poor, oh! worry not,
To suffer is man's earthly lot;
If rich do not the poor neglect,
St. Florian will your house protect."

Knowing that after that pious provision for mankind he would spend an hour at the inn, we proceeded with our celebration though not without fear and trembling. Yanczy Pal lighted the first and last match, crossing himself and committing the town to the care of St. Florian, as from his outstretched hand a monster serpent leaped hissing toward the sky and from its mouth spewed bombs of many colors which fell across the church steeple and poured a rain of fire upon the thatched roofs of the town. Then that happened, which so often has happened in the United States, before the Fourth of July became safe and sane. The entire contents of the box went into the air at once; for Yanczy Pal had dropped the unextinguished match into it. Immediately we were enveloped in whirling wheels and hissing serpents. Never since the Prussians had taken the town had there been heard such a dreadful

cannonade. Doors were opened, cries of alarm were heard and men were running toward St. Florian, who was gloriously illumined by the elements which he was supposed to control.

In spite of our paralyzing fear we ran, but were too frightened to shout the "Battle Cry of Freedom." Fortunately we were not very far from the little alley which led to Russian Hill. We crossed the creek in the dark, found our way to Russian Hill by the light of the unpitying stars, and then went into hiding in our sheltering cave, more gruesome than ever. My comrades began to whimper, for some of them suffered from minor burns, and more, from fear.

None of us dared return to our homes except the Gypsy boys, who, their homes being in the open, did not have to fear creaking hinges and telltale stairs. The rest of us huddled close together and awaited developments. We heard the watchman blow the tenth hour, then in a pious song call down the curses of Heaven upon all unrepentant sinners who plan mischief in the dark —

" Oh, ye who have transgressed to-night,
Ye cannot be secure in flight.
The power of God, or arm of State
Will reach you ere the night is late.
Come forth out of your hiding-place
While yet there is forgiving grace,
Oh, hear—while I the hour blow
Or else you'll go to Hell below."

We knew he meant us and silently awaited the judgment of Heaven. We did not have long to wait. The murmur of voices became audible in the distance, and Yanczy Pal, the bravest of us, who was guarding the Hill, reported lights hurrying in our direction. They came nearer and nearer and encircled the Hill. Then we heard the voice of treason. Rudolph the lame was leading the gendarmes toward the cave and pointing out the opening. We were betrayed, but not yet defeated. We dragged the skeleton to the opening of the cave. I say we, although no one was brave enough to do it but Yanczy Pal. It broke into fragments as he pulled it, but enough remained to guard the entrance to our fortress.

We were sheltered behind the frame of the man who at one time was a brave soldier,

and for a minute or more his defense was a mighty tower.

The first gendarme who approached the cave gave a fierce yell when he faced the grinning skull, then ran headlong down the Hill. We heard a scampering of many feet and saw the lights moving away from us. Another gendarme approached. He pushed aside the skeleton, and then our brave General threw at him another frightful object. While he was not hurt, he almost turned turtle in his flight, his lantern dropped to the ground and he was swallowed by the darkness.

We heard again the voice of the traitor telling the enemy not to be afraid, that he knew it was just a bunch of boys, and he named us. Then the flood broke upon us. Again lights approached the opening of the cave but now we had no more skulls to throw. Faintly we could see the watchman with his ancient weapon pointed at us. Behind him came the gendarmes and we knew that the battle was lost. We were dragged out, taken to the court-house, locked up in a filthy hole, and our parents were sent for.

In their presence we were chastised in the way and in the place boys have been chastised from the beginning of the world. Also we were told what all boys are told and none believe—that it "hurt our parents more than it did us."

Our unfortunate parents were assessed a proper fine which they paid, after which we went home, sadder and wiser but undaunted; for I managed to whisper to Yanczy Pal that Uncle Joe had told me that the Lincoln Army suffered defeat many a time, that the war lasted four years and was finally won.

"Yes," he replied, "that's so." Then he added, "*Basama Teremtete*" on the traitor.

When we reached home I was once more punished and I felt so sick that I did not need to be *sent* to bed. When at last I fell asleep I dreamed dreadful dreams of skeletons and slaughter; of the Russian Hill collapsing and falling right on my stomach. Rudolph the lame was riding it as if it were a hobby horse, and calling my attention to the fact that veterans were good for something after all.

Uncle Joe was there and I could hear him sob as if his heart would break. Gradually the dream seemed to fade away. I remember how relieved I felt that it was only a dream. I was not in jail but in my room, safe between two feather beds. However, I was puzzled, because while all the rest of the dream had faded, Uncle Joe was there. His hand was softly touching my curls and he was sobbing, his head buried in one of the feather beds. I called him by name. His crutch, which was leaning against the bed, fell, as he rose on his one leg, evidently startled by my voice; then his whole body seemed to collapse over me as he embraced me. Between sobs he told me that I had had typhoid fever for many weeks and that they did not expect me to live. Had I died he would have committed suicide; for he would have been my murderer.

The doctor came and Uncle Joe was sent from the room for fear he would excite me too much. In a few minutes he came hobbling back and knocked at the door, asking permission to give me something. He

pressed a piece of paper into my hands but I felt too weak to read it. I fell asleep and slept the first dreamless sleep for many a day. When I woke the note was still in my hand, moist from perspiration. Slowly I unfolded it. "My dear *Yingelle* (little boy), get well as quickly as you can. Please forgive me for drinking up your Fourth of July. I am glad I did not swallow the fireworks although my insides felt as if I had swallowed them. I will never drink another drop of liquor, so help me Abraham Lincoln."

Thus in spite of the fact that the Fourth of July did not liberate anybody but ended in a catastrophe, including several cases of typhoid fever, it was nevertheless a glorious and never-to-be-forgotten day; for the peasants declared that a miracle had happened. St. Florian had protected the town from fire which had rained from Heaven upon the thatched roofs of their *isbas*, and Uncle Joe stayed sober—until—but that is another story; for one cannot expect two miracles to happen in one day.

IV

The Burial of a Hill, when Abraham Lincoln's Famous Speech again Became Famous

OUR town was the seat of government for a large district, and the aristocrats were the officials, or the officials were the aristocrats—either would be correct. Judges, tax assayers, collectors and commanders of gendarmes gave the town both dignity and revenue, and it was sadly in need of both.

The official most envied by us was the *Kisbiro*, who discharged a multiplicity of functions, being justice of the peace, jailor and town crier. He looked about ten feet tall to boys of our size; but that he was seven feet I know, for the deaf and dumb tailor who made his clothes also made mine. As he could not read even figures, he meas-

ured the length of his patrons against the wall, and I took official measurement of the *Kisbiro's* height with a yardstick.

Whether he had sufficient judicial wisdom to be justice of the peace I do not know; but he looked fierce enough to be a jailor; he could beat a drum so that it sounded like a small thunder-storm, and he announced the new laws and regulations as if he were talking from Mount Sinai. We envied him neither his size nor his many offices, but we did envy him his great big drum; for it was the one thing our army needed to be really an army. Who knows how we might have stirred the world for liberty, had we possessed that elemental musical instrument?

At the first, imperious beats of his drum on a certain morning, some time after the community had recovered from its first Fourth of July celebration, old and young rushed into the street to hear the latest official announcement. "By command of the *Velky moshny*" (which, literally translated, means high and mighty) "*Foe Ispan*, there will be a holiday on next Tuesday. All

stores, shops and schools are to be closed from nine till twelve." That was good news.

He also commanded by the same high authority that no water should be drawn from the wells in the vicinity of Russian Hill, which Hill would be demolished on that day, and its contents officially reburied in consecrated ground. That was bad news, for we should lose a perfectly good cave and a famous sliding place.

Russian Hill, which was thus officially to go out of existence, had a history long before we gave it importance by our Fourth of July celebration, and as it is not entirely unconnected with modern events, I may as well tell about it now.

Our country was, politically, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was made up of two badly matched halves each wanting to be the whole, and that had been the cause of much friction, which in 1848 ended in a conflagration. Our half of Hungary was in revolt against the other half, and its people set up a separate government under a great patriot whose name was Lajos Kossuth. He

had to flee from his country and for a while lived in the United States and was treated as a guest of the nation. He spoke before Congress, and at a banquet given him, Daniel Webster made an eloquent speech, eulogizing this famous Hungarian exile.

The Austrian government was unable to conquer the revolting Hungarians, so the Emperor asked the Czar of Russia to send his troops to help him. Russia and Austria have been foes and allies so often that it keeps boys wondering whether nations have any more sense than youngsters, who give each other a black eye one day, and the next day nibble at the same ice-cream cone. The Czar despatched his soldiers, and they fought the revolutionists near the town where we lived.

The heroic dead, Russians, Croatians, Hungarians and what not, were buried together, and their mass grave was called Russian Hill; but its historic importance was almost forgotten until we recalled it to the authorities.

That it had been a menace to the health

of the community had to be found out by an epidemic of typhoid fever, a direct result of our celebration, which therefore was justified. With the decision to bury the dead in consecrated ground, there arose anew the problems which ever disturbed our never peaceful religious atmosphere.

There were three cemeteries in which the three religious communions buried their dead, Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews; and though not always overcareful where or how their people lived, they were very particular about where they were buried; so the reinterment of the remains in Russian Hill led to a violent quarrel, which was finally left to the government for settlement. As government settlement involved the usual delay, I had time fully to recover and the community had time to forget; so I had an important part in the public ceremony in spite of the fact that a few months before I had been a fugitive from justice.

By competitive trial I was chosen to make a speech on behalf of the school children, on that solemnly festal occasion. All my con-

servative relatives were opposed to my taking part, because the government decided that the Roman Catholic cemetery had a better claim to the dead than that of any other faith. My mother consented to my participation in the exercises because Uncle Joe, who during his long sojourn in the United States had lost whatever religious scruples he may have had, pointed out the fact that it was the patriotic and not the religious phase of the occasion which I was to represent. After all, what are the objections of Orthodox relatives compared with one's chance to make a speech before the dignitaries of one's little but significant world?

The speech I was to deliver was written for me by my teacher, and in Uncle Joe's eyes it had three faults. First, it was too long; second, it was full of big words, hard to pronounce and harder to understand; third, it was written in an antagonistic spirit, exalting one national group over the other and therefore calculated to create bad feeling.

So Uncle Joe took it upon himself to ab-

breviate and simplify it, which he did so effectively that, when under his training I had learned it, not a bit of the original speech remained. To this day I remember every word of it; for what one stores in one's brain when very young is rarely forgotten, and those words had their permanent effect upon my diction as well as upon my thought. Each simple sentence was as clear as if cut into steel, the thoughts were sublime, and wooed me by their kindly spirit.

I have always felt profoundly grateful to Uncle Joe for writing that speech; although I was severely punished for using it instead of the one prepared for me. It took me twenty years or more to find out that Uncle Joe was a plagiarist; but I have forgiven him, and I am sure that Abraham Lincoln has, for in his brain and heart the thoughts were conceived. No doubt it was the first time that his words were heard in our country, and they were like balm upon the festering wounds of our racial body, so distressed by jealousies, hates and prejudices. One sentence of that speech has helped me more

than anything I have since read, outside the Bible; but I would anticipate should I quote it now.

Other members of the Lincoln Army had a share in the proceedings. Yanczy Pal in his gorgeous uniform led the procession of school children, and acted as master of ceremonies during the exercises conducted by them.

"Cannonball" carried a wreath which encircled his whole body, and the heat and dust made him look like an animated fried cake.

"Speckled Horse" proudly bore the school flag; so on the whole, the Lincoln Army did not fare badly in the distribution of honors.

I was proud, but most unhappy. I wore a new suit of clothes; for though I had been told that I was not to have any after ruining my best suit in our late campaign, this official occasion demanded one. It was made large enough in anticipation of my growth, and heavy enough in preparation for the coming autumn. I also wore new shoes with patent leather tips, and it was a hot,

sultry day. The heat seemed to expand my suit and contract my shoes, and my torment was increased by the collar I wore. I had not yet reached the age when I could boast collars of my own, so that on state occasions I wore one which was never intended for a male being. It belonged to my sister. Women evidently can stand all sorts of tortures from their clothes—tortures under which the sterner sex wilts; and that is exactly what I did, I wilted, all of me. My poor brain, in anticipation of the speech, my collar and everything else except my shoes; they refused to wilt, but grew stiff as boiler plate, and the hotter they grew, the more unyielding they became, and I was in torment every minute.

All the ministers of the different religious faiths took part, and to make sure that the remains were properly buried, a priest of the Greek Orthodox church, which was not represented among us, was imported for the occasion. He officiated for nearly two hours, most of the time in a language which no one understood, so that I was not the only suf-

ferer. When he finished, in my anxiety to be done, I thought Yanczy Pal signalled that it was my turn, but instead the choir was to sing. So while I ascended the steps to the platform, they sang a beautiful although sad anthem, which like all anthems was largely the repetition of one phrase: "Their weary feet are at rest, are at rest." I felt nothing but feet and saw nothing but steps, of which there seemed to be a thousand. At last the choir ceased to glorify the feet of the dead and my chance came. I saw Uncle Joe crowding close to the platform. He planted himself directly in front of me; for he had pinned the speech to his Grand Army hat which he held so that in case my memory failed me, I could read it.

The precaution was not necessary. The speech had become part of me. It was inspired by Lincoln's Gettysburg address, most of which it embodied, and was as applicable then as it was at the national cemetery when the survivors of our Civil War were asked to rededicate themselves to the Union.

There were also sentences from other addresses, more or less aptly interwoven, and the closing words were Lincoln's immortal phrase: "With malice toward none, and charity toward all."

I was not old enough to know the full meaning of it, but I think I sensed it, and my audience received it with its full, vibrating force. When I finished, there was a silence and then a shout, quite out of keeping with funerals. The crowd surged around me. The Greek Orthodox priest embraced me till I seemed suffocated in his embroidered vestments; the Lutheran pastor shook my hand and the Roman Catholic priest extended his for me to kiss. After so democratic an address I was in no mood for that, but I shook it, much to his discomfiture.

A dear lady of the nobility anointed me with her tears, while another nearly spoiled my new suit by traces of rouge. All the time I was eager to escape my large suit, my small shoes and my collar, whose pins had broken loose from their moorings and were stabbing me.

When I escaped my admirers I faced the reverse side of the shield. The teacher who had written my speech took me by my wilted collar and shook me until my teeth chattered, telling me to stay after school the next day to be punished.

At last under the shelter of a blooming acacia tree, I divested myself of my new shoes, my cruel collar and heavy coat. I was joined by "Cannonball," "Speckled Horse" and Yanczy Pal, who then and there demonstrated how futile the noble thoughts of the best of men may be.

The officers of the Lincoln Army, assembled for the first time since their betrayal by Rudolph the lame, began planning how to wreak vengeance upon him. How could I enter into their schemes, with that glorious closing sentence still vibrating in my ears, like the notes of a hymn amid the arches of some great cathedral —

"*With malice toward none, with charity toward all.*"

V

In Which the Spirit of Abraham Lincoln Triumphs over That of Napoleon Bonaparte

YANCZY PAL, be it understood, was an aristocrat, and came from a very illustrious family. His warrior ancestors as a reward for their services received much land from the king. They built themselves a big house which was called a *Castell.* It had two stories, and was for a long time the only building in our town which boasted such dizzy heights. It contained many rooms which seemed to us children royal in their appointments; although when Yanczy Pal was born in one of them, their splendor had faded. The tapestried walls were dingy, and the upholstered furniture was so worn that the springs protruded like the ribs of a lean cow. The ancestral portraits which adorned the walls

looked dull and their gilded frames were tarnished and crumbling.

To us of the Lincoln Army not born in two-story buildings and with no illustrious ancestors, it was inspiring; and it was a great day in our lives when we were permitted to walk over the waxed floors and gaze our fill at the wonderful sights.

There were a few of those things which especially fascinated me, and one was a piano. I suspect that if I should see it now, it would look small, old-fashioned and insignificant, and would sound like an old tin pan if I heard it; but then it seemed to me the most remarkable and most mysterious thing I had ever seen, and heavenly harps played by some angelic musician would not have sounded half so sweet as when Yanczy Pal's older sister played the Blue Danube Waltz on that battered instrument.

Still a greater fascination than that of the piano was exercised over me by a suit of mail, once worn by Yanczy Pal's heroic ancestors. It was so huge that only a giant could have carried it, and stood in the State

room, or that which had served as one. At the time of which I am writing it was used as a bedchamber when high State officials or military officers visited our district. Later, when I read the romances of Walter Scott, they had the same kind of influence over me as this armor. It stimulated my imagination, and many a fantastic story swept through my brain as I gazed at the suit of mail. I thought of castles and kings, the clash of arms; gallant knights, and lance thrusts for fair ladies. I created for myself a world of my own in which I lived every time I had a chance to look at that ancient relic.

The greatest thrill which the *Castell* afforded me and which made my rather dreary world very exciting, was a secret passage which Yanczy Pal and I discovered. A castle wouldn't be a castle without a secret passage, and a boy's life would be without one of its supreme experiences without his knowing or reading of it. The secret passage in the *Castell* led from the panelled State room out into the garden, and cruel gossip had it that it was used by Yanczy

Pal's spendthrift ancestors to escape from their creditors.

In the park at the rear was the tenpin alley, and thither at the appointed time we found our way across devious paths; for Yanczy Pal's parents were trying to shield their aristocratic son from contact with us plebeians. The tenpin alley itself was overgrown by weeds, and so uneven that the tenpins were battered and hadn't much leg to stand on. They were ever so much easier to knock down than to put up, and the strong jarring of the balls usually sent them all into a heap. The balls were oval from wear, and so split and gouged that to my imagination they suggested skulls; therefore when the Lincoln Army gathered that afternoon, we all renewed our vows and pledged our lives, with our hands upon the tenpin balls.

The army, since its defeat, was badly crippled in numbers and none of us dared appear in uniform. There are cowards everywhere, even in the Lincoln Army, and many of its former members failed to respond to their names when the General once more reviewed

us. Evidently he had seen a picture of the defeated Napoleon, and I suspected that he was imitating him, as he stood before us, his head on his breast, one hand behind his back, and one between the buttons of his coat, his hat askew, Napoleon fashion.

Then he addressed us, with the echoes of the funeral orations still in his mind. It was all very eloquent and moving. There was only one object before us and that had to be speedily accomplished—vengeance on the traitor. Armin Grünwald and Cannonball were ordered to bring the lame boy dead or alive, and the rest of us remained to plan the manner of his punishment. I cannot quite imagine what we thought about the matter. I know I had a frightful horror of death, and the very word created in my mind an unpleasant sensation; so to deliberately plan the death of another human being must have been repellent and horrible. I remember that one boy, Pavel Chorvat, the blacksmith's son, suggested pieces of sulphur matches soaked in whisky; another one proposed poisonous mushrooms. Shooting and

hanging were suggested; but we had no firearms, and hanging seemed very cruel. When the vote was taken, the poisonous mushrooms carried the day, and I, as the Commissary Department, was ordered to procure them immediately.

Not far from the tenpin alley was a famous tree. It was so large that ten boys hand in hand could not span it, and its height seemed to reach the clouds, like the spire of some great cathedral. It was called the Hussite tree, because it was believed that the Hussites, a persecuted religious sect, once worshipped under it. Mushrooms in abundance grew around it. The dampness which enveloped me when I began looking for them must have cooled my vengeful spirit, and my horror of death led me to select such of the fungi as I knew not to be poisonous. When I returned to the army, it had been suggested that we all hide in the branches of the Hussite tree, and when our brave squadron, which had gone for the traitor, returned with him, we should appear suddenly with the cry: "Death to the traitor!"

Before very long we heard the expedition returning, bringing Rudolph. He had been taken by guile, not knowing of the reorganization of the army, and walked into the trap we had laid, unconscious of what awaited him. As soon as he came under the tree we shouted together, "Death to the traitor!" and climbing down as fast as we could, encircled our victim. He was terribly frightened and tried to run away. Fear added to his strength and it took the combined efforts of the army to drag him to the tenpin alley where his punishment was to be meted out. His face was red from rage. He struggled desperately, scratching, kicking and spitting, and Yanczy Pal's announcement that he was forthwith to be executed drove the poor fellow into a fit of hysterics. Fortunately I remembered that Rudolph had taught me "gibberish," a language which is sometimes called "dog Latin." For two lessons I paid him three old steel pens and a dill pickle.

In the hubbub I managed to tell him that nothing would happen to him, but that he must do exactly what he was commanded.

He quieted down, and Yanczy Pal, again assuming the Napoleonic attitude, harangued the traitor, telling him of his own illustrious ancestor, who cut off the heads of a whole regiment of soldiers for insubordination, and that with the same courage he would now take the life of our betrayer.

"Executioner, come forward!" he shouted at me. I left the ranks and approaching my victim, offered him the "cup of hemlock," some water in which the mushrooms had been soaked. To the consternation of his tormentors he took the cup out of my hand and drained it. I saw the look of horror creeping from face to face; no doubt the boys were beginning to realize the cruelty of it, or they were thinking of the consequences to themselves.

I cannot help wondering whether I was not posing, and wished to appear magnanimous. At any rate I called the attention of the army to the fact that Uncle Joe was a deserter and was about to be shot when Abraham Lincoln pardoned him, and that in all things we must do what he had done. Every one was ready

to forgive the offense, but the problem was how to save the boy who had already drunk the fatal poison. I suggested to the horrified army that I had read somewhere that if a person who has eaten poisonous mushrooms is soundly slapped in the face, it will cure him. I was implored to do it, and to do it quickly. With a solemn air, I walked up to the lame boy, and told him that, though he deserved death, in the name of Abraham Lincoln we would forgive him, if he would swear by one of the tenpin balls that he would tell no one what had happened, that he would rejoin the army, and henceforth be faithful. He so promised.

I am sure that Yanczy Pal was not quite satisfied by the procedure for he once more assumed the Napoleonic attitude, and again talked of his noble ancestor who cut off the heads of a whole regiment of soldiers. I, too, acted a part, for I assumed the Lincoln pose, as best I could. I repeated in a very loud voice a sentence from the speech prepared for me by Uncle Joe and for which I received twenty lashes from the teacher whose

literary effort had been made useless. That was the first, but not the last time I suffered for the glorious sentiment it contained.

"With malice toward none and charity toward all," I repeated; then slapped the lame boy soundly in the face, at the same time telling him that he was both cured and forgiven.

As Rudolph did not die then and there, but lived to be a useful and loyal member of the Lincoln Army, I proved conclusively that slapping a boy's face is a good antidote for poisonous mushrooms, that charity is a good cure for malice and that Abraham Lincoln was a better man to follow than Napoleon or Yanczy Pal's heroic and glorious ancestors.

In spite of the fact that all the members of the Lincoln Army felt very happy in having saved a human life and forgiven a traitor, Yanczy Pal told us upon adjournment that we were a lot of cowards and sissies. To emphasize his disgust with us and especially with me, he said "*Basama Teremtete*" three times, then spat on the ground three times, and once in my direction. He dismissed us

and told us to appear in the same place on a certain day (for the Hussite tree was to be our headquarters), as he had resolved upon far more thrilling adventures in the future. From that time, however, our army was never again as united as before; for Yanczy Pal became my enemy and Rudolph was my friend. The seeds of discord had been sown, and the harvest was not so very far away.

VI

A Real Tyrant is Put to Flight by an Imitation Ghost

DEPRIVED of our cave we took to the tree top. In the natural history of man, the process is supposed to be reversed. When man was living in the tree tops, he naturally used his arms more than his legs, just like the monkeys; and when he sprang down, and ran into a hole to hide himself from his enemies, he began to use his legs, and became ever so much more of a man, and less of a monkey. Some of us had not sprung very far, judging from the way we took to the tree in whose branches we had built ourselves a club-house. We came together to improve our minds, sadly in need of it. We possessed only one book, a History of the United States, lent us by Uncle Joe, who took great interest in our venture,

but knew nothing about the mischief we were concocting.

Uncle Joe had told us that Abraham Lincoln had not gone to school and that he educated himself out of books which he read lying on the bare floor. While we would have liked to do in all things as he did, especially in not going to school, the law and our parents compelled us to go; so we borrowed whatever books we could, and proceeded to educate ourselves according to Abraham Lincoln.

We had no public library and I doubt that there were a hundred books in the town. There were only two sources open to us; one of them was a loan library kept by the glazier, who lived in one room, which was workshop, living-room and library combined. The books were largely yellowbacks of the cheapest and poorest kind. The other was the library shelves in the State room of Yanczy Pal's home. These books were a curious combination of a little bit of everything. They were mostly religious books written in Latin, so were not very useful in our educa-

tion, and we had to borrow them when nobody was looking, which was not proper or always easy. Nevertheless a deep impression was made upon us by what we read, and the mere handling of the books we could not understand left its influence.

It is over forty years since all this happened; yet the other day when my boy asked me what an automaton is, my mind immediately jumped back forty years, and I saw Pavel Chorvat, pockmarked, strong, ill-smelling youth, to whom I had been reading about a remarkable automaton which was being exhibited in the capitals of Europe. It was the topic of conversation at that period, and we went to work at once to make one out of the steel armor in Yanczy Pal's State room.

We sneaked up our secret passage, Pavel with a lot of wires and tools borrowed from his father's shop. I followed with the big book which had in it the description of the automaton. After many fruitless attempts, he finally succeeded in making the knight lift his steel hands, when we manipulated the

wires. It was Pavel's first step toward becoming an inventive genius, and it aroused in all of us whatever mechanical skill we possessed, and could couple with our rich imaginations.

Now, as I think back to that period, I realize how scant our supply of books was, and how inappropriate those we did read; also how deep was the impression which they made upon our minds. Whenever I go to a public library and see the stacks of books, the free access to them, rooms for the children, and the librarians especially trained to care for their intellectual needs, I wonder whether as we had too little, the children now may not have too much, and whether the advantage was not ours.

We certainly did appreciate the printed page, and in an unsystematic way came to know that there was a larger world than our own, and that much could be learned about it through books. Above all else it gave us new ideals, which in our confused way we tried to realize. Yanczy Pal and a few others chafed under this unsoldier-like existence,

and more than once when I read aloud, I noticed that they were restless and did not share with me my thirst for knowledge.

We were growing older and changing in many ways, but a greater change was taking place in the world around us which, though it was tucked away in the Carpathian Mountains, felt the pressure of industrial and political events. We saw the use of the first coal oil lamp, and were able to explain its mysteries to those who had not educated themselves as we had. We greeted the coming of the first sewing-machine with particular joy, because it came from America, and we knew something about the inventor and the location of the factory which exported the machines to Europe. We were also present when the first threshing-machine made its appearance. It was the first steam-driven machine any one in our region had ever seen, and two tragedies were connected with its coming.

The first day it was used, after drink had been passed to the laborers, one of them wanted to show his courage by jumping over

the opening into which the grain was fed. He fell into it, his feet were caught by the revolving machinery, and while he was not instantly killed, he died soon after. This incident impressed itself deeply upon our minds; for it was the first violent death we had seen. That night the peasants attacked the threshing-machine and demolished it, because they believed it was made by the devil.

But the changes which affected us most were in the political field and they furnished that kind of activity for the army which our General desired, and which was needed to keep up its martial spirit.

I have already indicated that the country in which I lived was inhabited by many different races and peoples, speaking different languages. The ruling people were the *Magyars*, who spoke a language which they brought with them from Asia, their original home. They were a warlike race and conquered many small nations. Out of their territory they formed the Kingdom of Hungary, which later became a part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. For many centuries

they permitted the different people to speak their own languages, but suddenly they decided that all must learn the language of their conquerors, and that momentous decision was made at a time when the Lincoln Army had no other object than to get an education *à la* Abraham Lincoln.

The cruel blow fell first of all upon our teachers. Those who did not know the *Magyar* language were discharged, and a strange type, less kindly and very arrogant, took their places. Our text-books were taken from us, and replaced by those in a new language which many of us had never spoken and did not understand. Our names were *Magyarized* and turned around, for in the new language the family name comes first and the given name last. The names of the streets were changed; even our town was rebaptized so that we really lived in a totally different world.

The new order was to be officially inaugurated by the visit of a great functionary. He was the *Foe Ispan*, a sort of governor, who was appointed to his office by the king.

He was to be received officially, and the entire population in its various capacities went out to meet him—the clergy, the school children, the different guilds, the gendarmes, and the many officials in whom we were richly blessed.

The *Foe Ispan* arrived in his state carriage drawn by six horses, with marvellous, richly decorated harness. They raised a great cloud of dust, and as the carriage came nearer and nearer, we shouted at a given signal: "*Elyen! Elyen!*" which was the cheer in the language under which we were now to live. It means "Long may he live," or something complimentary like that; but to tell the truth we didn't care how long he lived, for we had made up our minds that we wouldn't like him because he came to oppress us.

Of course his headquarters were in Yanczy Pal's home, and this gave the Lincoln Army its chance to again act in a liberating capacity. There was much scouring and cooking and ever and ever so many things to do there, so that the members of the Lincoln

Army could lay their plans pretty much unobserved. Every one was excited about the *Foe Ispan's* coming, and so were we, but from a different cause. We planned to drive the oppressor from the town, and lay all its inhabitants under obligation to us. We had little doubt that our names would become as immortal as that of Abraham Lincoln.

That night there was a State supper at Yanczy Pal's home, to which many of the town dignitaries were invited. It lasted long into the night; so after all our preparations were made, we went home, said our prayers and went to bed. When we were supposed to be asleep we got up, and without saying our prayers, went to the Hussite tree, and together moved toward the secret entrance. It is only fair to say that the whole army was not active in this enterprise. As usual Yanczy Pal was the directing genius, although I must lay claim to having suggested some of the most cruel features of the night's performances.

Pavel Chorvat as the mechanician was present, and Rudolph the lame boy was

given the opportunity to redeem himself by showing especial bravery in undertaking the most risky part of the enterprise. Cannon-ball was not invited to come, for he was too fat to squeeze through the secret passage.

We walked up the concealed stairway noiselessly, having left our shoes at home, and each of us went to our appointed post while the *Foe Ispan* was regaled with meat and drink, and long after-dinner speeches. Through the secret opening in the book-shelves we crept into his room. Rudolph was helped into the suit of armor and shown how to manipulate the wires, by which the head could be turned at will, and the hands lifted. We had tried to make it walk, but that is something no automaton has ever been able to do, and we had to be satisfied with these meagre achievements.

Back of the book-shelves we had arranged sheets of tin, hammers, bells, and a very interesting toy which makes an annoying racket. It is not unknown as an instrument of torture in the hands of American youngsters of the present day. Removing a few

books from the shelves, gave us a chance to watch what was going on in the room and be ready for flight if things should not go as we had planned.

The maid came in to turn back the sheets and arrange the heavy feather beds under which his Highness was to slumber, but didn't. She extinguished the lamp and lighted a candle which served our purpose admirably. We managed to keep quiet while she was in the room, although if she heard any noise she might have thought that it was rats, which are rather partial to castles. Yanczy Pal had provided some coffee to keep us awake during our vigil, but once I thought that Rudolph had gone to sleep within the armored knight. I crept into the room and poked his steel ribs, frightening him badly.

It was long after eleven o'clock when his Highness, the *Foe Ispan*, appeared. Evidently the red wine he had been drinking had put him in good humor, for he came in smiling, rubbing his hands and cracking his knuckles. He was none too steady on his

feet, and as he approached the knight we were fearful that he might collide with him. Fortunately he managed to steer clear of him, but he stopped in front of him and winked, and we heard him say: "Well, old man, what are you doing here?" Then he laughed as if pleased by his joke.

We heard him groan as he stooped to pull off his boots. Evidently it was a long and hard job; for he groaned as if he were in great pain. This gave Rudolph the opportunity to manipulate his wires. The hands of the knight, which were in repose when the *Foe Ispan* entered the room, were now pointing at him. When he lifted his head after the shoes were off and saw the changed position of the hands he cried: "*Basama Teremtete!*" which, as my readers know, is unprintable in English. Then he picked up a shoe and threw it at the knight who quickly turned his head and lifted his mailed fist threateningly. When the *Foe Ispan* saw that, he yelled at the top of his voice and dived under his feather bed, covering himself as much as he could, no doubt with the determina-

tion not to drink so much red wine the next time.

We gave him time to compose his badly shaken nerves, and then methodically we turned the rattle just half a turn at a time. He sat up, relighted the candle, looked under the bed, listened at the door which led into the next room, then blew out the candle and went to bed again. We gave him a few minutes more, and Pavel Chorvat began striking the tin plate with a hammer at regular intervals until the fatal twelfth stroke sounded.

Then the *Foe Ispan* jumped out of bed. He did not take time to light the candle. In the dark he grabbed what clothes he could, but did not stop to put them on. He rushed for the door which he could not find, for we heard him feeling around the wall. The next moment the worst that could have happened to him occurred; he collided with the armored knight, and Rudolph let loose an unearthly yell. At that instant the *Foe Ispan* found the door, made for the stairway, which was nearer than he thought, and we heard his

rotund figure strike every step as he fell to the bottom.

Needless to say we did not stay where we were. We quickly liberated Rudolph, picked up our paraphernalia and hurried back to our beds.

"The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft aglee," and so did ours; for instead of delivering the town from the oppressor, he stayed for a week, much to the dismay of Yanczy Pal's parents. He had to remain in bed, but refused to occupy the State room, so another had to be prepared, and he was under the care of the doctor, who dosed him for his shattered nerves and plastered up his bruises.

All sorts of rumors were current in the town. Some said he drank so much that he was on the verge of delirium tremens; others believed that the devil came to fetch him, and said they smelled sulphur in his room. That was true, for we had used a good many old-fashioned sulphur matches. For a long time the castle had the reputation of being haunted. There were a few wise ones who

knew just what kind of imps were after the *Foe Ispan.* Fortunately for us they were the Slovaks, who hated the new order of things, and were not sorry that we had been in such ghostly mischief. We did not know that our secret was not our own, until we had said good-bye to his Highness.

He was leaving without pomp and ceremony. The army, however, was there to say good-bye to him. As his carriage began to move we cried: "*Elyen! Elyen!*" and he opened his purse and threw us some coppers. Money in the hands of boys was rather scarce, so although it came from our enemy, we picked the pennies out of the dust and made for the grocery store, kept by a very interesting old man who was called the "King of the Slovaks," because he was their last descendant and an ardent defender of his people's rights. His name was Svatopluk Holub, after the last Slovak king. He sold two kinds of candy: stick candy of uncertain age, and candy whistles which were our favorite confection, because we could blow them and suck them at the same time; music and

sweetness both for a penny. We invested in a whistle apiece. As we passed our pennies to the old man, he took me by my curly hair and shook me, saying with a faded smile playing upon his sad and wrinkled face: "*Ve ste velke Hunczuty.*" "You are great rascals. Keep your money, and come to see me soon again."

We kept the money and went to see him soon again, and so learned to know of the sorrows and burdens of the "King of the Slovaks," who was a particular friend of Uncle Joe.

VII

The "King of the Slovaks" Enters into His Rest and Uncle Joe Rings the Church Bells

UNCLE JOE had travelled farther than anybody in our town not only in miles but also in his thought. He had no sympathy with the racial and religious quarrels of our community. "*Yingele*," he used to say, "a man is a nigger only when he is black in his heart, and before God a half naked Gypsy is as good as a proud Magyar in red breeches. Only God the Almighty could make a man; but even our deaf and dumb tailor can make a man's clothes. It does not matter about a man's creed or his language; the question is, how does he live and what does he say?"

A man with such ideas was regarded as somewhat of a revolutionist, and but few people could understand him and fewer sympathized with him; that may be the reason

he lived so much with children. Since he had remained sober and was saving his money, he had still fewer friends. He had one crony, and that was the "King of the Slovaks." Whenever I had to look for Uncle Joe I would go to the grocery store, and if I found him he would give me a piece of herring, a delicacy to which he became addicted when he stopped drinking, and which I accepted not because I liked herring, but because after having eaten it I needed something to sweeten my mouth.

The eating of the herring was quite a ceremonious affair. The "King of the Slovaks" served it on a piece of brown paper; then Uncle Joe would take his penknife, scale the fish and, while I held it by the tail, beat it thoroughly on both sides with the handle of the knife, singing, as he did so, a little song which was used when he was a boy and which had survived until my own day. For all I know to the contrary, it may still be used in making salt herring ready for the skinning. This is the first verse:

"Little fishes when they're caught
They are really good for nought
But to scale them, and to beat,
Skin them, then they're good to eat."

The second and third verses were just like the first.

In the same ceremonious way, after being skinned, and halved, the air bladder, which was called the soul of the fish, would be sent to heaven; that is, it was thrown to the ceiling, and if it stuck there the soul was safe, but if it didn't, and fell to the floor, it was utterly lost. It must be said that as Uncle Joe had served in the army, his aim was good, and all his herring were good herring.

The two men were great talkers, Uncle Joe easily outdoing the grocer, and while the two men talked, I would suck my candy. I noticed that at such a time I was never given a candy whistle, but a stick of candy; for had I received a whistle, the temptation to use it would have been irresistible, and I should have disturbed their interesting conversation.

When Uncle Joe was not talking about the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, and the

Negroes whom he helped to free, Svatopluk Holub would talk about his royal ancestors, the Slovaks, and their struggle to retain their language and customs. They were rarely interrupted in their conversation, for customers were few, and when they came they had to wait the "King's" pleasure before he would hand them the two cents' worth of sugar they wished to buy.

Usually Uncle Joe made a round of visits on Saturday afternoon. That was his religious exercise; for his visits were always among the poor and the lonely. His round was always the same. He began with an old couple, one of which, the man, was dying from cancer. I never wanted to go in there with him, but he would take me by the back of my neck and say: "You have been to the synagogue and have prayed and have eaten a piece of fat Sabbath goose; now come in and get some more religion."

Then there was an old widow, who had been rich and now lived upon charity. She was a dear, dried-up little lady, immaculately neat, and I loved to go to see her. Uncle

Joe would sit by her side and hold her hand as he told her about his adventures in the New World. I noticed that he always told her about the ladies he had courted and those who had courted him, and she would shake her skinny finger at him and say: "'As the twig is bent so is the tree inclined'; you were a charmer before you went to America. You proposed to me when you were fourteen years old." "Too bad you didn't take me," he would tell her, "then I would still have my leg and arm."

There were half a dozen places we visited, but invariably he would end at Svatopluk Holub's who always had the same greeting: "Come in," he would say; "let us eat a herring and save its soul." On Sunday afternoons when the grocery store was closed to the public, Uncle Joe would drop in for a cup of tea. It was brewed from the blossom of the linden tree and was horribly bitter tasting stuff, but I always took as many cups as I could get; for with each cup there was a piece of rock candy which lasted long after the bitter taste of the tea had disappeared.

The "King," like Uncle Joe, was an old bachelor. There was a story of his having fallen in love with the daughter of the Baron, and that she loved him; but not only was he poor—he was a Slovak patriot, and her father was a *Magyar* and would not hear of their marriage; so she had entered a nunnery. He always wore the picturesque costume of his people. He not only dressed like a Slovak, he also looked like one. The *Magyars* wore mustachios, the fiercer and longer they were, the more one was a *Magyar;* he was smoothly shaved.

The special characteristic of his dress was the shirt, which was a sort of badge of defiance. He was one of the few men among the educated class who wore it, and it became the symbol of his loyalty. The shirt, which was gaily embroidered, had no collar, buttoned on the side and was not tucked in at the waist. He wore that kind of shirt, though because of it he lost one customer after another, and when he was summoned before the judge and had it taken from him, the next day or week or as soon as he could pro-

cure such a shirt again, he defied the authorities by wearing it.

Our army had split in two; it was pro-shirt and anti-shirt. Yanczy Pal led the anti-shirt or *Magyar* party, and he had the majority of the boys on his side. The pro-shirt party was led by Pavel Chorvat, who was the strongest of us, and in our frequent fights we usually won, though Pavel did most of the beating. The pro-shirt army had its headquarters at the "King's" store, while Yanczy Pal and his set met in the Hussite tree. Military enterprises gradually grew out of the reach of our group, not only because we were few, but because the "powers that be" were against us; so we decided to avenge ourselves and write a book. May I say in all modesty that the idea was mine, and that Pavel Chorvat opposed it as outside the province of an army; but when I told him that we would write a book about the Slovaks, something to stir the world to the wrongs they suffered, he gave his permission, though he was of very little use.

I was not discouraged in my undertaking

by the fact that I had read in the Bible during my lessons in religion that "of the making of books there is no end"; though I agreed with the writer that "much learning is a weariness to the flesh," especially the learning which came to us in a new language and turned our little world upside down.

I was soundly whipped for saying that Abraham Lincoln was a greater man than Stephen the First, King of the Hungarians, who was indeed a good king as kings go; but how could he have been better than Abraham Lincoln? Pavel Chorvat was not only beaten but locked up in the schoolmaster's cellar for saying that Svatopluk Holub was the King of the Slovaks. We began writing the book as a revenge upon the unjust government, and we relied upon Svatopluk Holub to furnish us the facts. We were sure of the facts; where the paper, the printing press, and the money were to come from we did not know, or care. The story. as we gathered it and never wrote, was something like this. I cannot vouch that it is exactly as he told it to us, for we wrote our

notes on pieces of brown paper and very frequently Uncle Joe would beat his herring on them; so making them odorous and useless.

The "King" looked every inch a King when he told us the meaning of the word Slav. "It may come from the word *Slava* which means fame, or from *Slovo* which means to speak." He thought it was the latter because they called the other people, especially the Germans, "*Nemczy*," which means the dumb, or those who cannot speak. Uncle Joe agreed that it was the latter, for that is usual with people who do not understand one another.

"They are of great antiquity," Svatopluk told us, "and occupied all the region in Europe from the North Sea down to the Black Sea. They were not warriors but hunters, and then they became farmers, and have never ceased to love the soil." He insisted that the Slavs invented all agricultural implements, and tried to prove it by the fact that the word for plough in all the languages is from the Slavic. Uncle Joe retorted that the Americans invented every-

thing, and there was a lively squabble between them. The "King" argued that our word plough came from the Slavic *pluch* and Uncle Joe was equally sure that plough was used long before *pluch*.

"The warlike nations," the "King" continued, when Uncle Joe would let him, "drove the Slavs from the land they possessed, conquered them and tried to make Germans out of them. Then the Turks came in vast hordes out of Asia, devastated their towns and villages, and carried their wives and daughters away into their harems. Then the *Magyars* came and they were the worst of all," and again there was a lively clash between him and Uncle Joe, who could not think of any one worse than the Turks.

"The trouble with you Slavs," Uncle Joe said, "is that you need an Abraham Lincoln and the Union, and not till you have them will you amount to anything in the world." Uncle Joe's panacea for everything was Abraham Lincoln and the Union.

"You little Slovaks, what do you amount to?" he said contemptuously; "but if all

you Slavic nationalities were united, you could drive the *Magyars* back to Asia where they came from."

He did not say that very loud, for it was treason and would have got him into trouble. I had written several pages of notes, when Uncle Joe took them from me, and said, "That will make a fine bed for my dying herring. Bring us a fat one, a milt one;" so a herring was skinned and its soul sent to heaven on my literary effort.

I think it was Ascension Day when I visited the "King" alone. I was puzzled even then by the religious differences which divided our community, and he told me just how the Christian religion came to his people. "They were once heathens, even as every one's ancestors were, and their religion was very barbaric, and cruel. It left the people ignorant and degraded, and one of my kingly ancestors sent emissaries to the Greek King who was ruling his world from Constantinople, asking him to send among the Slavic people missionaries who spoke their language and could preach to them. Prior to that

time some missionaries had come from Germany. They were pious and good men, but not being able to speak Slavic, the people were suspicious of them because the German kings were their enemies. King Michael then sent them two consecrated monks, who came into this very region where we are living." That, of course, excited me very much, for I realized for the first time that our place was of historic importance.

"Their lives were so Christlike that it did not take them very long to spread their faith and their memory has never faded from the minds of the grateful Slavs. The names of these missionaries were Cyril and Methodius, and the alphabet, which they invented and which many of the Slavic people use, is called the Cyrillian alphabet."

While I retained some of the historic facts he told me, and learning so much about these people later helped me to remember, I have forgotten the best things, the snatches of song and the folk tales. There is one story, however, which I remember, because I tried to make a really great story out of it

later in life and failed; but I shall write it down in the simple way in which he told it, which may after all be the best way.

"THE MAGIC VIOLIN

"A dear old grandfather lived with his young grandson in a village, and feeling his end approaching, bequeathed him his violin. From the birds the lad learned his songs, and as he mourned for his grandfather, he played plaintively on his instrument. Many years passed and the youth went to the village dances to play. In one place he met a most beautiful maiden whose name no one knew, nor did any one know whence she came. After the dance she always disappeared in the forest. He fell in love with her and she loved him.

"A very wicked woman, who was the personification of envy, told the other girls, who were jealous of the beautiful stranger, to scatter the white fluffy seed pods of dandelions on the floor, and if she were a wood fairy, as they thought, her clothes would catch fire.

"When the maiden came out of the forest

to the dance, she noticed the seed pods and disappeared, to the grief of her lover, who nearly died from his great sorrow. When he recovered he took his violin and went out into the world to seek her. Everywhere at the edge of the forests he played, wandering among the trees day and night, calling for his beloved.

"One day in the spring when all the flowers were in bloom, he was playing on a rock at the edge of a beautiful lake. He was putting all his heartache into his music so that the very trees began to sigh and the flowers wept sweet-scented tears. Suddenly the maiden appeared to him. His joy knew no bounds, and he would not let her go again. She told him that she had been stolen from her parents' home while she was a little baby in her cradle, and that she was cursed to be a wood fairy for a hundred years or until some youth through ardent love would release her from the curse by his music. This he had done and she was free to marry him.

"He was overjoyed, but before they were married he had to promise her that he would

never be rude to her nor beat her as the Slovak husbands often beat their wives; for even if he should strike her with the stems of flowers, the curse would come back and she would have to live out her hundred years in the forest. This he promised and was a very tender and loving husband. They prospered and were growing very rich.

"One time when he was away on business, she told the hired man to go out into the fields and cut the rye and bring it into the barn. When her husband returned he thought she had done wrong and began to scold her. In his anger he took a handful of the grain, and slapped her hands. She wept bitterly and told him that if he had been patient with her one more day, the curse would have been removed forever; but now she must go back into the forest for a hundred years. She disappeared, leaving the heart-broken man alone on the farm. The next day it stormed and hailed and every one's harvest but his was ruined. Then he realized that his wife was right in having the grain brought into the barn.

That winter the neighbors were starving, and being jealous because he remained rich, they set fire to his barn, and he had to flee for his life. All he saved of his possessions was the precious violin, and he went out into the world again to seek his wife.

"On the same rock on the shore where he had wooed her, she appeared to him in a dream and told him that she could not return to him again. She touched the violin with her fairy fingers, and out of her hair made new strings for his bow. She kissed his forehead, and told him to go out into the world and make the people happy with his music. Wherever he went he charmed and entranced his hearers, for his music was not like that of mortals but like the music of heaven. He grew famous and rich but he never returned to his home, and never was happy, for he was still seeking his lost wife. One day he was found in the shadow of the same rock where she had come to him. The violin was clasped close to his heart, and on his face shone a beautiful, peaceful smile which did not fade away—he was dead!"

Every time I hear a really great violinist, especially if he is of the Slavic race, and so many of them are, I think of this touching story which, though it is only a fairy story, reveals the genius and also some of the weaknesses of these great people.

The "King of the Slovaks" looked less kingly as time passed. He was wretchedly poor, and the edibles in his store were growing old and stale. Even his herring became uneatable. "Their souls have turned black," Uncle Joe said, "and when a herring's soul turns black it is fit neither for heaven nor for hell." Although the "King" was poor and ill, his shirt was always immaculate and always defiantly Slavic.

One day as I went to school I noticed that the door of his store was locked. I raised the alarm. Pavel Chorvat lifted me up to the window and when I knocked repeatedly and there was no answer, he went home and brought his father, who opened the door, and we found the "King of the Slovaks" dead in his bed, and the room full of charcoal fumes.

No one knew just how he died, but the

Kisbiro who acted as coroner said that he died by his own hand. None of us would believe it, although the church authorities did; for he was denied a public funeral, the bells were not to ring for him, and he was to be buried in unconsecrated ground. However there was a funeral procession, though there were neither acolytes nor holy water.

All the faithful Slovaks, dressed in their national garb, followed the plain, unpainted casket, and when they reached the corner of the *Kunovska Ulitza* they heard the church bells ring. They rang irregularly and discordantly, for they were being rung by three hands unused to such a task. One of the hands was Uncle Joe's and the other two were mine. Uncle Joe paid a heavy fine, more than half his monthly pension money, and as he gave it to the *Kisbiro*, he said something which neither he nor I understood. It sounded like *Basama Teremtete*, only there was more of it, and I knew the words were English; for it was not the first time he had used them in my presence.

VIII

The Marvellous, Magical, Mechanical Theater Presents the Civil War, and Uncle Joe Suffers Defeat and Wins a Victory

I AM glad I lived at a time when wonders never ceased, when even the commonplace thrilled me, and the unusual was a miracle. A wandering troup of *bayazos* (jugglers and tumblers), in tights and velvet breeches, seemed like a chapter from a fairy tale; and when I saw a toy balloon which Yanczy Pal had—for he had everything—it excited me more than when, a few years ago, Billy Robinson flew over our American home in a flying machine which he had built.

The railroad was a day's journey from us; I knew of the telegraph, but had not yet heard its ticking. Once my teacher demonstrated an electric battery which rang a bell,

and I nearly lost my faith in the Almighty; for what was there left for Him to do, if some acids could create energy?

Most of Uncle Joe's wonder stories about America I took with a grain of salt; but when he tried to describe Barnum's circus, I reluctantly put him down as a liar.

I know my boy would not exchange his youth for mine, and why should he? The world moves by him on the screen; at the turn of a crank he hears his favorite Jazz band (horror of horrors to me); and he can play the piano by stepping on it, though he may not know one note from the other; but I am wondering whether he ever had such a thrill as I experienced when I read on a poster pasted on a corner house of the *Kunovska Ulitza* that "Madame Breshkovska's Marvellous, Magical, Mechanical Theater" would favor our town with a visit and give daily exhibitions of its wonders. Posters were not uncommon on that particular corner, but they were usually small and very prosaic, announcing when the medical officers would come to examine men for the army, or when

the taxes were due, or when everybody had to appear before the doctor to be vaccinated.

These posters were huge in comparison, and were colored, and there were pictures which were meant to whet our unsatisfied appetites—and they did. There were adjectives in the reading matter such as I never knew any language could possess. "Gigantic, marvellous, wonderful, stupendous, spectacular, amazing" were a few of them. Of course if I had ever seen an American circus poster, those words would have seemed tame, and one of the thrills would have been missing out of my life. Besides these adjectives there were other words whose meaning we could but vaguely guess—"kaleidoscopic, bengalic lights, stereopticon, amphitheater, and the hanging gardens of Semiramis."

I am not exaggerating when I say that I spent hours reading and rereading the poster, and my poor brain was dizzy from the whirl of the anticipated wonders. Even Uncle Joe was wildly excited, for one paragraph on the poster promised in eloquent

language, "pictures from the Great American War," and the battles were to be fought on the stage by soldiers "mechanically agitated, but true to life."

One morning as I went to school, the *Rinok* (the town square on which all streets meet) wore a new aspect. Madame Breshkovska's "marvellous, magical, mechanical theater" had arrived, and the world was not quite the same. Four gaudily painted wagons of the circus type were lined up between St. Florian and St. Michael. Children of all ages stood around with mouths agape, and stayed there in spite of the fact that the school bells were ringing, and dire punishment awaited the tardy ones. One of the wagons was especially attractive. The cherubim and seraphim which guarded the Holy of Holies could not have been as gorgeously attired as were the carved figures which adorned its four corners. On one side was a portico shaded by an awning of badly faded cloth of gold, and over the door which led into the interior was written that which brought us both hope and despair. Allur-

ing descriptions of the wonders displayed within were printed in two languages:

"An education without going to school; travel without going out of town; the whole world at your feet for a trifle; the treasures of the universe for a look!" That was hope.

"Admission first class, one florin; second class, fifty kreutzers; third class, in the gallery, thirty kreutzers. Soldiers, and children under six, half price." That spelled despair. A florin was as much as a million to most of us, thirty kreutzers for third class was a fortune, and all of us were considerably over six years of age.

Yanczy Pal told us boastingly that he was going first class, and none of us believed it. I had a faint hope that Uncle Joe would take me; but Rudolph, Speckled Horse and Cannonball were absolutely hopeless of ever getting "an education without going to school," or seeing "the treasures of the universe." Armin Grünwald, our erstwhile captain of cavalry, was the other fortunate one whom the gods favored. He was a horseman's son, and his father had the honor of

boarding the noble steeds which drew the "marvellous, magical, mechanical theater." Some of the performers were to share that honor with the horses.

While we stood before the wagon, torn between hope and despair, and mostly despairing, the door opened and a woman rolled into view. How she ever managed to come through that door I do not know, for when she emerged she filled all the space under the awning, and the cherubim and seraphim were hidden from us. Madame Breshkovska, for it was she, was no beauty and yet she was fascinating, at least to me; for she was indeed a new species, as new and strange as her "marvellous, magical, mechanical theater." Her nose was almost lost between her snapping black eyes and her huge mouth, which looked larger by virtue of a quite unmistakable mustache. Her square chin was adorned by a beard. She addressed us in a voice whose *timbre* might cause a calliope to blush. She was not a bit complimentary. She called us "loafers" and invited us either to "light out or step in" and

have a share in getting the wonders of the world ready for the public. No second invitation was necessary; school or no school, we entered upon our tasks with an ardor never evoked by our mothers' invitations to fetch and carry.

Pavel Chorvat, being the strongest, became assistant to the tent crew, while Cannonball was to join the orchestra and carry the big drum. He was selected for this task because he was of a size almost to fit a spare uniform, and how we envied him! Speckled Horse and Rudolph were to be stage hands, and I, the youngest and smallest, was selected for the most humble of all duties—I was to peel potatoes. The boys laughed at me and I had a good notion to cut and run, but how glad I was that I did not follow my first impulse; for my position made me a member of the family. I peeled potatoes under the supervision of Ludmilla, my first fairy queen, who pulled my curly hair after the manner of Uncle Joe; but it did not hurt. She awoke vanity within me by telling me that so pretty a boy as I ought to become a photographer,

and then all the ladies would come to have their pictures taken, and I would become a rich man. At the first chance I looked into a mirror and thought myself as beautiful as the cherubim and seraphim ; so I determined to become a photographer.

That whole day was as different from others as any day well could be; I walked on clouds though I peeled potatoes for hours; for this I was soundly spanked when I came home at noon with my clothes wet and spotted. When I returned to school my teacher made me write "Go to the ant, thou sluggard" five hundred times for playing truant. Evidently he and Ludmilla did not agree about my future.

From two to four each day we studied religion, and never before was my mind so little on my lesson as that day. What did I care for the wanderings of my forefathers in the wilderness and the voice of God speaking from Sinai, when the "marvellous, magical, mechanical theater" was to throw open its portals that evening, and I had a third class ticket in my pocket, earned by peeling pota-

toes? What did the wise man's lament about "vanity, all is vanity" mean to me, when I still felt Ludmilla's hand upon my curly head and heard her voice ringing in my ears, saying that I ought to be a photographer, and that the ladies would come to me to have their pictures taken?

Time went at a snail's pace, and the pages of the Bible seemed endless; but at last it was four o'clock, the lesson in religion was over and I was on the *Rinok*, the transformed *Rinok*. St. Florian was almost lost beside the gorgeous tent which had arisen by his side, and St. Michael was invisible; in fact he was inside the tent and had a chance to see the wonders of the world for nothing. At the main entrance stood the cherubim and seraphim and beneath the awning a throne was being made ready for the queen, who was to open the portals to the wonders of the world and take in the sheckels.

None of my friends who had accepted positions with the theater had come to school to study religion. They had been completely absorbed by their tasks, and

were helping to get the wonder world ready. The crowd surged around the tent and long before the advertised opening hour the entrance was besieged by a mob; somewhere in its midst was a little boy, nearly suffocated but sublimely happy, and that little boy was I.

At last the band appeared above the portico, Cannonball in a red uniform somewhat too small for him, beating the drum with all his might without regard to time or rhythm. I had never before seen a man blowing a horn which he seemed to swallow and bring up again, and Gabriel's trumpet could not have been more awe-inspiring. The man who was curled up inside the double base horn like a snail in its shell made me laugh; I thought the most skillful of the musicians was the one who beat the snare drum, throwing the drumsticks into the air and catching them again without missing any of the music. He certainly was a wonder.

On one throne sat Madame Breshkovska and on the other side, on a throne less lofty

and not so secure, sat my queen, Ludmilla. I have no talent for describing ladies' gowns, and the lack of it was early manifested. All I know is that the dresses were the most wonderful I had ever seen, and though since that time I have seen real queens and empresses in their State attire, I think none of them wore such wonderful clothes.

Madame Breshkovska acted as her own "barker." I wish there were a more fitting word, for indeed she did not bark, she bellowed. When she finally called out "*Entrez*, *Entrez*, Ladies and Gentlemen, *Entrez!* The marvellous, magical, mechanical theater is now open! *Entrez! Entrez!*" you would have gone in, even if you had known that your doom awaited you there.

The crowd was mostly third class; not only because third class folk were more numerous but because first and second class people had reserved seats, and thus the rich missed the biggest part of the fun. What could be more exciting than to be part of a great throng hungry for the wonders of the

world, pushing toward the goal, with one mind and one energized, joyful agony; holding on to its coppers until the doors were opened, then throwing them down in reckless *abandon* and racing for the gallery? Nearly squeezed to death I reached the door, my ticket safely clasped in my hand as I thought, only to find when I opened it that it was as empty as a broken egg-shell, and I nearly as badly crushed.

Vainly did I plead with Ludmilla, telling her that I was the boy who peeled the potatoes and whose curls she had admired. Oh, woman! Thy name is inconstancy! She did not know me, or pretended not to know me, and the same hand which had patted my curls caught me by the back of my neck and drew me out of the engulfing vortex, away from the gate of my paradise. I might have become a woman hater then and there, and I should not have been to blame; for few men are crossed in love so early in life. I cried so loud that I was heard above the sliding trombone and the beat of Cannonball's drum.

Then my unexpressed prayer was heard and my deliverer sent; for Uncle Joe appeared and he had two first class tickets, one for himself and one for me. He had bought them that afternoon and had been looking for me everywhere. Thus ever is the darkest hour just before the dawn and I proudly walked in and made a face at my lady love as I passed by her throne. Our seats were in the first row, where as yet no one but the nobility sat. Yanczy Pal was my neighbor, and he didn't like it a little bit.

Has ever any man's fortune turned more completely around? In the morning peeling potatoes to earn a third class ticket, and in the evening sitting in the first row, on a plush-covered seat, with judges and tax assessors and other dignitaries and right next to the haughty General, Yanczy Pal! Inwardly I crowed louder than any rooster ever could have crowed, and I took every occasion to let the people in the gallery know where I sat. But my curiosity was stronger than my vanity, and soon I became absorbed in the preparations for the opening. Mysterious

noises were heard behind the scenes, the band began to play and at last a bell rang, the signal for the performance to begin. A hood was dropped over the chandelier in which nearly a hundred candles flickered, and a mysterious gloom filled the tent.

The magic lantern was the first of the wonders seen. Shapes and colors leaped upon the screen and wound in and out in kaleidoscopic fashion, making my head dizzy, yet filling my mind with awe. Where did these shapes come from? Where did they go? Uncle Joe tried to explain, but his physics were as weak as my understanding, and it remained a wonder till greater miracles happened.

Pictures of distant scenes crept out of the dark, and we could almost touch them. Paris, Peking and St. Petersburg were there; palaces of kings and great cathedrals showed to us their façades and towers; monuments and bridges enriched our drab existence. Indeed it was fairy-land, and worth more than it cost, and I forgot the fickleness of woman in the glory of the new, strange scenes.

Some way the seven wonders of the world did not appeal to me as much as the newer wonders, and I shall never forget what I felt when the Capitol at Washington was flashed upon the screen. Uncle Joe gave a shout which was heard all over the tent. The high and well born nobility did not like his audible approval, and hisses were heard. Uncle Joe, however, was in his element and so was I. That Capitol thrilled me as no building has since. It was the Temple of Freedom! It typified the thing I had learned to fight for so early in life! It was the people's Capitol, yea, above all else it was *Abraham Lincoln's Capitol!* There he stood when he made that inaugural speech, there he put his hand upon the Book and swore to uphold the constitution; and there his body had lain in state!

When the next picture appeared I thought Uncle Joe had lost his mind, for he leaped from his seat and, hardly resting upon his crutch, he waved his hat toward the crowd and shouted, "Three cheers for Abraham Lincoln!" There, indeed, was his face upon the screen, more than life size, smiling upon

us as if to say, "I like you, dear people, I have always liked you, and I hope you are having a good time." Once more Uncle Joe shouted, "Three cheers for Abraham Lincoln!" and again he gave them, three times three, with a will. Again the nobility was shocked, and the judge came over to Uncle Joe and told him to behave himself or he would be thrown out; that this was not the wilderness of America, but a highly civilized community. Uncle Joe, freeman that he was, told the judge to "mind his own business," and the show proceeded.

The third part was the American war, fought by soldiers "mechanically agitated." I do not recall now how large the figures were. I do know that they were not much agitated, for they went across the stage in solid formations much like tin soldiers in a box. When they began to move Uncle Joe was up again and whistling "Marching through Georgia." Soon, however, he began to hurl contemptuous remarks toward the stage. "That wasn't a war," he said, "that was a parade. Get a move on them."

This time Madame Breshkovska appeared through the gloom and whispered into Uncle Joe's ear. He told her that she had a fake war on that stage and he wouldn't stand for it. A quarrel was imminent, and I hoped it would not break up the show.

At that moment a "mechanically agitated" soldier appeared, carrying an American flag which fluttered enticingly in a "mechanically agitated" breeze. I know now what the flag says at a time like that, and I can understand just why Uncle Joe held up his crutch with his hat on top of it and waved it frantically as he gave three cheers for the flag, and yelled like a mad man. I have felt that way myself, many a time. But then I wished Uncle Joe's patriotism were not of quite so violent a brand, for a dark shadow swept over the lighted stage obscuring both flag and soldiers. Madame Breshkovska swooped down upon Uncle Joe, and picking him up as if he were a feather, carried him out of the tent, while the hood was drawn up to light her on her way and make Uncle Joe's disgrace visible to all. She did not go through the near-

est door but the whole length of the tent, dropping him on the ground outside. I followed with his crutch and his hat.

"Go back, *Yingele*," he said, trying to push me through the door; but his joy had been mine in seeing the Capitol, and Abraham Lincoln, and the waving flag, and the disgrace was mine, too; so I never saw the end of those "treasures of the universe." But what other treasures could there have been?

Uncle Joe felt the disgrace of being carried out by a woman, and felt it so much that when on our way home we approached the Black Eagle, he began to falter, and his body swayed in the direction of the door. Suddenly he thrust me from him as if a great power which he could not resist controlled him, and entered the inn, leaving me in the dark, to go home alone.

When Madame Breshkovska's "marvellous, magical, mechanical theater" left us, St. Florian and St. Michael looked down upon a changed world; for Uncle Joe had "got religion" and Rudolph the lame had run away with the "Wonders of the Universe."

IX

Uncle Joe Gets Religion and Pays His Debt to Abraham Lincoln

ALTHOUGH my mother told me a dozen times to lie still and go to sleep, I did not for I could not. My brain was in a whirl. I saw strange geometric figures appearing and disappearing, cathedrals flew by me like monster butterflies, cities were created and annihilated, and I fought the Civil War with Uncle Joe and Abraham Lincoln. Ludmilla stroked my curls, then held me by the back of my neck, and I decided to become a photographer so that all the young ladies would come and have their pictures taken and make her jealous. Just before I fell asleep I heard Uncle Joe push his door open with his crutch, and that excited me even more than the whirl of the wonders of the world; indeed it was the greatest wonder, for Uncle

Joe had never before come home the same night on which he entered the Black Eagle Inn.

When I woke the next morning I found him sober and sad. A new, strange look had come into his eyes as if he were both ashamed and surprised. He did not allude to the events of the evening before, and went out shortly after drinking his coffee. Fearing that he might be returning to the inn, I followed him; but much to my surprise he went into the house of the Rabbi instead, and that was even a greater miracle than his remaining sober when he had money.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that Uncle Joe and the Rabbi had not been on speaking terms. Uncle Joe was as much a heathen in the eyes of the Rabbi as he was a revolutionist in the eyes of the law. He never went to the synagogue, he ridiculed all forms of religion whose spirit had departed from them, and, horror of horrors, it was rumored that he ate pork. The rumor was correct, for when my mother reproved him for that iniquity he said: "I ate pork for

three years in the army, and it didn't hurt me, and if hogs are really such bad animals as you think, the best thing to do is to kill them and eat them." Of course that was poor reasoning and a bad example for the rest of us, to whom the abstinence from pork was one of the pillars of our faith. More than once my mother was reproved by the Rabbi for harboring an apostate in her home, and a very pious uncle of mine never entered our door while he was living with us; but she steadfastly refused to turn him out.

Just what happened in the Rabbi's home we never knew; but on the following Friday evening, the eve of the Sabbath, Uncle Joe surprised me by saying, "*Yingele*, I will go to the temple with you." All through the service Uncle Joe sat by my side in our family pew, which smelled of varnish and tallow candles, watching me; rising when the responses called for rising, and kissing the sacred fringes fervently when he saw me kissing them.

The pious men were not so engrossed in their devotions that they failed to notice

Uncle Joe in the place where he had not been seen before. There was quite an audible hum as they commented upon it, and when we left the sacred precincts they gave him a "Good Sabbath" greeting, as if he were one of them. When we reached home, festally lighted by the Sabbath candles, and my mother, meeting me at the door, put her hands upon my head and blessed me as was her custom, Uncle Joe said in a subdued voice, "Bless me, too," and bowed his head as if he were just a little boy; and she blessed him.

Eating the Sabbath meal was as much a religious function as praying in the temple. A red cloth on which prayers were embroidered covered the poppy seed bread, and when it was withdrawn and the blessing asked upon the meal, Uncle Joe joined rather haltingly, for he had not repeated it for many a year. He had an annoying habit of eating his soup very noisily, and at this meal every spoonful he swallowed was accompanied by a nervous gulp, which was always a sign of his having something on his mind of which

he was eager to relieve himself. With a drumstick of the Sabbath goose in his hand, he gesticulated for some time without saying anything; when he had gathered sufficient courage he broke the silence of the evening by calling my mother by her first name, which he had never done before.

"Deborah, dear, do you believe in God?" My mother's faith had never wavered, and she scarcely knew what he meant. "I mean," he said, "do you believe that God cares enough for His creatures to take an interest in their affairs?" Here, too, her testimony was reassuring; for had not God comforted her when she was widowed and had He not sustained her when she was in despair?

Uncle Joe had dropped his drumstick. His head sank upon his chest till I feared that his beard and the gravy on his plate were in danger each of the other. "Deborah, dear," he said again, "you won't think me a fool or a lunatic if I tell you that I saw the Almighty Himself last night, at the Black Eagle Inn?"

Of that my mother was not so sure, for "no man can see God and live" and "surely the Almighty, blessed be His name, would look for a better place in which to reveal Himself than the unholy tobacco-smoke-filled Black Eagle Inn."

And then Uncle Joe told her his experience after he left "Madame Breshkovska's Marvellous, Magical, Mechanical Theater," which accounted for a number of mysterious things that had happened since he left me out in the dark, as he disappeared through the doors of the Black Eagle Inn. His shame at being carried out of the theater by a woman, the fumes of wine which assailed his nostrils, the unspent pension money in his pocket, were all to blame for his going into the inn at all. His cronies greeted him more joyfully because of his long absence from their carousals, and the waiter brought a bottle of Hungarian wine of his favorite vintage; but when he began to fill his glass something seemed to hold back his hand; he tried to lift the bottle and couldn't. Then involuntarily he closed his eyes and, without know-

ing why he did it, began repeating his evening prayer which he thought he had forgotten entirely; for it had lain unused in his mind since he said it the last time, sixty or more years ago.

While he was repeating it, he thought he saw God, looking as stern as the District Judge who had reproved him that evening. He had a long beard and fierce mustaches. He sat upon a thunder-cloud and lightning was playing all around Him. That was the way he used to see God when he was a little boy and tried to think what He looked like. Then the picture faded, and he saw God again; this time He wore the uniform of the Union Army, and when he could see His features He looked more like the Captain who court-martialed him when he deserted. Gradually the blue uniform faded away, and he saw a tall, lean, lank figure dressed all in black, and a face full of grief looked upon him. The forehead was wrinkled, the eyes were made tender by unshed tears, and he thought he heard the voice of Abraham Lincoln say to him: "Have I spared your

miserable life so that instead of dying as a deserter by bullets, you should die as a drunkard, killed by wine bottles?"

"Then," said Uncle Joe with deep solemnity, "a hand seemed to lift me from my chair. No, it was not the hand of Abraham Lincoln, he wouldn't have been strong enough to do it. It was the hand of the Almighty Himself, and He carried me out of the room as if I were a feather in His hand. No, I hadn't tasted a drop of the wine. I wasn't drunk; I was more sober than I have been for years. Deborah, dear, it was the hand of God Himself, blessed be His name!"

My mother did not have much faith in his religious experience, and she urged him to put into her keeping the unspent pension money; but he turned his pockets inside out to assure her that it was gone, and told her in a whisper, as if he did not wish the departed spirits to hear him, that he had given it all to the Rabbi for the "*Haskora*" (a memorial) to his most beloved dead.

From that time, Uncle Joe went twice each day to the synagogue, as if to make up for

his past deficiencies, and I, alas! had to go with him, for he could not wind the prayer strap around his arm or place it on his forehead. Not having had such a definite religious experience as Uncle Joe, and usually skipping whole pages of my prayers, I found his piety rather irksome; for he was as punctilious about my devotions as he was about his own. He punched my ribs or rapped my knuckles when he caught me skipping some of the prayers, evidently forgetting that the Lord Himself had not "lifted me out of my chair and carried me out as if I were a feather." I believed Him far away in His heaven and so busy running this universe that one or two pages of prayers more or less did not bother Him very much.

All Uncle Joe's belated religious fervor went into the observance of the Day of Atonement. My mother made him a prayer shroud of the finest linen, and he bought himself a silken prayer mantle, pledging a large part of his next pension money for it. I carried his paraphernalia of worship to the temple with some pride, though frankly I did not

anticipate the long day of fasting and prayer with any joy, and wished that it were the Fourth of July instead, with its still untasted joys of sandwiches and ice-cream. Uncle Joe looked unusually pale and worn, for his old enemy, the bronchial cough, was troubling him, though he tried to suppress it for fear of disturbing the service. The synagogue was always crowded on this solemn day. The air was heavy and humid, and as the slow hours wore on, women fainted from the rigor of the fast, and little boys teased for food. More than one of them slipped out and found their way into the pantry at home, and came back boasting how well they stood the fast, and that they were not a bit hungry.

But this time I was not one of the deserters, for Uncle Joe hovered over me as a hen hovers over her lonely chick. He scarcely permitted me to go from his side, for he needed my help in guiding him through the mazes of the long service, and he wanted to do everything according to custom. It was one of the longest and hardest days I ever lived. A thousand times or more, forward and back-

ward, I counted the spindles in the railing of the gallery which separated the women from the men worshippers, and each time Uncle Joe drew my attention back to the prayer book, often with his usual vicious pull at my curls. Twice I escaped him and went up to the gallery, and had a good cry, hiding my face in my mother's lap, and smelling at her quince pierced all over with cloves. That did not sufficiently revive me so I bit into it. The juice refreshed me, and I hope the recording angel did not take notice.

At last the sun was sinking and its welcome rays rested on the Ark in which the sacred scrolls of the Law were kept. The climax of the long service drew near, the stragglers came flocking back, the women ceased their chatter; the Rabbi, his hoary head covered by the prayer mantle, approached the sacred desk, and in plaintive voice began the service for the dead. Uncle Joe was all in a quiver, suppressing his persistent cough and gulping—a sure sign of his nervous state.

I am sorry to say that I have forgotten

nearly all the melodies of the synagogue service; it is a long long time since I heard them, but if I should live to be a hundred years old I shall remember that chant for the dead. It was almost a slumber song, as if the Rabbi were crooning a lullaby to the spirits of the departed, or trying to comfort them if they needed it, or assuring them that they were still remembered upon that earth from which they had gone, and that their immortality was secure. All were remembered in a general way; those who died of illness, or accident, through famine or through war. Then came a chant of exaltation, and a new, high and solemn note into his voice; it was the remembrance of the martyrs, and they were all named—the Rabbis burned by the inquisitors in Spain, those who had helped to conserve the faith by dying for it; then the names became more modern, and more familiar, names of those slain by the mobs in their "Jew baiting," and their descendants were as thrilled by this recital as if the very dead were come back among them.

Every one hung breathless upon the words

of the Rabbi; the atmosphere grew tense from spiritual excitement. There was a pause as if the end had come; then one name was uttered coupled with Uncle Joe's as the founder of that memorial: "Aa-vro-hom Leen-co-o-ln!" The last syllable was long drawn out by the Rabbi, who no doubt thought it was some foreign Hebrew he was thus remembering before the throne of the Almighty.

Then Uncle Joe's suppressed cough released itself. I thought the old man would choke to death, and I had to lead him out while his poor frame was shaken as by convulsions. He did not speak a word, while we sat for a long time on the stone bench, in the yard of the synagogue. Then between the paroxysms of his cough, I heard him say half questioningly: "We are quits now, Abraham Lincoln."

X

The Three-Quarters of a Man Is Made Whole again, and Uncle Joe Goes on His Last Journey

THE cough did not subside so that we could return to the synagogue for the closing service, and I fear I was not sorry. I had a hard time getting Uncle Joe home, for he was so exhausted that he could scarcely propel himself on his crutch, and I was too weak and hungry to help him. When we reached home he went to bed, and I had no other care than to look for the first star which was the heavenly signal that the fast might be broken. No astronomer ever searched the heavens with greater eagerness than I searched them, and when I saw a faint twinkle in the evening sky I proclaimed it most joyfully.

Uncle Joe coughed all night and did not

sleep that night, or the next day or night. The doctor made frequent visits, and shook his head; but long before Uncle Joe was told that this might be the end, he knew it. On Sunday afternoon I found my mother in his room, holding his emaciated hand and reassuring him as he tried hard to ask her to forgive him. Once or twice he attempted to lift the stump of his arm, forgetting that it was gone, or tried to raise his head, then sank back exhausted by the effort. His eyes had a far-away look and he was muttering in English. The next day the doctor came several times, and late in the afternoon, when I came home from school, I heard from afar the weird, discordant chanting of prayers, and the lamentations of the pious men of the burial society, who were helping the release of Uncle Joe's weary soul. Old men they were mostly, in their workaday dress. Their voices were hard and harsh, and I pitied the poor struggling, dying man, wishing with all my heart that I had the power to drive them all out of the room; for then he might have died more easily.

The Hebrew has no illusion about death; it is his goal, and he cannot escape it. He faces that fact every day, and wears his shroud at his wedding and on the great holy days. The Death Angel comes, and cares not to hide his coming. He seems to walk heavily over the creaking floor, with booted feet. The elemental agonies of the dying are not eased by words of consolation, nor is the grief of the mourners covered by draperies or fragrant flowers.

No doubt all the hope of the race for survival after death is contained in the prayers the men were offering, but they were recited in Hebrew, and neither they nor Uncle Joe knew what they were saying. His poor tortured soul was seeking its release. He saw me and beckoned. I tried to run away, for death held strange terrors for me; but the smile of recognition which flitted over his pain-drawn face drew me back, and I knelt before him, trying to hide my face in the feather bed on which he lay.

His hand moved over my curly hair (he was too weak to pull it) and I lifted my eyes

to his. He tried to point to the flag which was above his bed, and I, knowing what he wanted, climbed up and released it and spread it on the coverlet. His fingers moved nervously over it, as he tried to say something but couldn't. I nodded understandingly, for I knew he wanted to be buried in the flag. We had spoken of it many times.

"Bury me in the Stars and Stripes," he used to say, "even if I am buried in the potter's field. That's why I brought Old Glory with me."

He moved restlessly, still looking at me intently as if to say, "Don't you understand, little boy, what I want most?" I did understand, and took from the wall the picture of Abraham Lincoln, and he looked at it intently. I was about to remove it, for I was eager to be gone, but his beseeching eyes drew me back, and I held it before him again. He tried to lift himself but only half succeeded; then he raised his hand in salute, falteringly and with great effort—and fell back gasping for breath.

I fled from the room and ran as fast as I

could to tell the news to my cronies. I went to the *Castell* where I had not gone for a long time, to tell Yanczy Pal, for enmities are forgotten in the face of sad tidings; then up to the mill to tell Cannonball. I stopped at the smithy and shouted to Pavel Chorvat that Uncle Joe was dying. I think I felt proud; for in a place where news was scarce it was something of a privilege to be the first one to tell it.

When I reached home it was all over, and Uncle Joe had joined his comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic who had preceded him upon the last, long, weary march. In accordance with their custom the pious men laid his body on the floor. He was dressed in the new linen shroud which he had worn but recently on the Day of Atonement, and wrapped around it were the Stars and Stripes, which never before nor since covered a greater lover of the flag of freedom.

Upon a plain wooden slab his body was carried to the God's Acre and at the head of the funeral procession walked Yanczy Pal, Pavel Chorvat, Speckled Horse, Cannonball

and the Gypsy boys to whom he had given many a penny. I was in advance of them, for I had an appointment with Old Istvan behind the big willow tree at the farther end of the cemetery. He had brought his gun by request, and his dog came unbidden. I had contracted with the old peasant to fire a salute of two guns, but Yanczy Pal insisted that there must be three, both for military and religious reasons. I did not mind the extra cost for the other shot, but when I asked him what the religious reason was, and he said "One for the Father, one for the Son and one for the Holy Ghost," I objected. But Yanczy Pal being born to command, had his way. The pious men had said their prayers and Uncle Joe's body was lowered into the grave. As the men threw clods of earth upon it, at the same time praying that the burden of them might be light upon him, three shots were fired. Istvan and Yanczy Pal crossed themselves, there was a scamper of little feet, a cry of alarm from the mourners—and the Lincoln Army had paid its last tribute to its founder and inspirer—Uncle Joe.

XI

Tells How There Happens to Be a Lincoln Club on the East Side of New York

NO, it was not a trick of fate. We were foreordained to be Americans, all of us except Yanczy Pal. He went to the Military Academy in Vienna and received his commission, and when I saw him last he was riding at the head of his regiment. I felt like telling him not to look so proud and haughty, but he could not help that for he inherited his arrogance from his heroic ancestors, who wore their military decorations on their nightgowns and to whom all civilians were *Basama Teremtete.*

Since our boyhood I had seen him just once before, when I was revisiting the scenes of the Lincoln Army's exploits. My little girl was with me, and she was fascinated by the man in a sky blue uniform trimmed in gold braid and buttons. He stopped and

talked to the little "*Amerikanska*," and when I told him who I was he seemed glad, but only for a moment; then his face took on the Napoleonic expression. He put his hand between the buttons of his sky blue coat, clicked his spurs, and saying that times had changed, marched off with great dignity. For a minute I resented his indifference and was tempted to remind him that he had never given me back the handkerchief I lent him when a "veteran who is no earthly good in the army" had given him a very humiliating thrashing. Realizing, however, that I am a citizen of the United States, which is something more than being an officer in His Majesty's army, I refrained from recalling the incident.

While Yanczy Pal never became an American, he married a very rich American, who, as it was reported, ruled the regiment and its commander; so while the rest of us became citizens of the United States, he merely became, although indirectly, its subject.

Most of the rest of us you will find in New

York City, that great catch basin of the world's human overflow. All of us are among those whom Abraham Lincoln said God evidently liked, for He made so many of them,—the poor. Individually we own no real estate, but together we have purchased an acre of ground, "out Jersey way," for a cemetery; for the poor, while living in tenements, want to make sure that they need not be buried in paupers' graves.

Twice a month on Sunday afternoons, the members of the Lincoln Army living in New York meet together. If you care to visit them you will have to take the Third Avenue elevated, which, of course, is cheaper than a taxi; and while you travel you may see "how the other half lives." You must not be so absorbed in looking at the moving picture, of which each glimpse is a tragedy or a comedy, as to forget to leave the car on Sixtieth Street, or thereabouts. Be sure that you turn east rather than west, for here, indeed, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." Here you will strike the backwash from Fifth Avenue and

Park Avenue, from costly mansions and as costly apartments. In these crowded streets live the postmen, butlers, pressers and cleaners, chauffeurs and manicurists, and the multitude of those who minister to the rich. On each corner is a saloon with a *delicatessen* shop not far away, and Hungarian and Bohemian restaurants and coffee houses cater to national appetites.

A block or two from the car line you will find a building completely given over to the gratification of the fraternal instinct, the passion for coöperation. Ascending a steep, musty stairway, you enter a small lodge room, used in turn by Secret Societies, Labor Unions, and Sick and Benefit Associations. It is full of all sorts of paraphernalia, the symbols of brotherhood used in the ritual of the religion of doing good. Don't be repelled by the odors, which range from stale cigarette smoke to that which is most innocent and yet most penetrating—garlic. The sour smell of the drippings from the near-by bar is quite obtrusive, and the air is apt to be heavy and stifling.

I went to this room for the first time a good many years ago, when first I learned that several prominent members of the Lincoln Army belonged to a "Sick and Benefit" society which held its meetings there. The Stars and Stripes are in evidence, not born of the patriotic fervor engendered by the war; the flag has been there ever since this club became part tenants of the lodge room. The picture of Abraham Lincoln hangs on one side of the Grand Master's chair and that of Uncle Joe on the other side, and when the members enter the room they always salute them and the flag which drapes them. Gradually they have learned proper decorum for they were unaccustomed to parliamentary usage, and at first the meetings were highly entertaining.

However, if you had attended one with me on the second Sunday in April of this year, you would have found the proceedings conducted not only according to Roberts' Rules of Order, but full of patriotic fervor, for they were dedicating their service flag. Their wives and children and grandchildren were

with them, and while they created a little confusion, they also added to the impressiveness of the occasion.

Rudolph the lame presided. Doubtless you remember that it was he who ran away with the "Marvellous, Magical, Mechanical Theater." Years after, he married Ludmilla, the fairy queen who had roused my ambition to become a photographer.

Cannonball, grown unrecognizably slender, well-groomed, and looking thoroughly efficient, led his tiny granddaughter of three years, to the platform. Her part in the program was to pledge allegiance to the flag. A more exquisite little creature I have never seen—like a bit of delicate china, with large, liquid gray eyes and hair of burnished gold.

Encouraged by a few reassuring words from her proud grandfather, she began, her fingers meanwhile twisting in and out of the folds of her abbreviated white frock:

"I pledge alle-g-i-ance to my—flag (there she saluted) and the re-pub-lic for which it stands. One nation, in-di-vi-si-ble"—that was such a big word—"with lib-er-ty and

justice for all." The last few words were said all in one breath, quickly, as children are apt to say last words of "a piece."

A storm of applause followed, and as if moved by one impulse, those foreign-born parents and grandparents rose, and saluted the flag—*their* flag.

Speckled Horse is secretary of the club and is remarkably efficient. His daughter played the Star Spangled Banner, and we all knew every verse, and sang without falling by the way when its high notes were reached.

The secretary read the minutes of the last meeting. In these days when billions of dollars are offered up on the altar of our country, you might not have been thrilled by the sums of money they have given for the Red Cross and the purchase of Liberty Bonds; but when you remember that none of them has ever earned more than five dollars a day, and that most of them work at seasonal labor, their hundreds and thousands are fairly eloquent. What touched me even more than the money they have given for our be-

loved land, was the fact that over one-third of the members of that Abraham Lincoln Club pledged not less than one hour daily for work in the Liberty Loan or Red Cross campaigns. This work, of course, had to be done after their day's duties were over. Also they are looking after their own dependents and have drawn into their fellowship nearly three hundred of their countrymen, later comers to this new Fatherland; have paid weekly sick benefits, looked after the unemployed, and buried the dead. None of them has become a burden to charitable organizations, nor have they exploited society, but they have contributed to the national weal by performing necessary labor.

One of their number, and he the most modest among them, Cannonball, is now in government employ, and is doing expert work faithfully for a wage not at all in proportion to the service he renders. How proud he is thus to serve his country, and how we all admire him!

Before the meeting closed the service flag was unfurled. Six stars shine there for sons

serving our country "somewhere in France"; all have gone voluntarily and the Lincoln Club is justly proud of them. One of the stars is golden. It is Speckled Horse who mourns for his son, who went with the engineers, and it was his company which, while safe in the rear, sprang to the aid of the hard-pressed British, and he met his death doing more than his duty. I trust that Uncle Joe has met this brave young spirit up yonder, where they are remembering us, living in the throes of our suffering.

When the service flag had been properly hung, Rudolph the lame made the dedicatory address, and I quote the closing sentences of his truly great speech.

"Some day when we shall be safely removed from this unbelievable time, when passions have cooled and the past is but a precious memory, the service which we, the foreign-born in America, have rendered, will be recorded. We of the Lincoln Club are but a fraction of the millions who have labored in mine and mill to strengthen the national arm; who have given ungrudgingly of our

pittance and have sent out our sons with heavy hearts, perhaps, but with gratitude that we too may have a share in the universal sacrifice. Our six stars represent a very small part of some four hundred thousand alien-born in the service of this government, and our gold star is but one of the thousands which in splendor shall shine through the ages, proclaiming our loyalty to our adopted country.

"Let us go to our homes and to our work with new courage to live, and suffer, and die, if need be; so that this 'government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.'"

The women were crying and the men were winking hard, if not frankly wiping their eyes, when the chairman's gavel struck the table, and the meeting was declared adjourned.

* * * * * *

Most people look back upon certain days in their lives, which they call "Red Letter" days, and among many such in my life I recall two, with feelings of profound grati-

tude: one was the day when I received official notice that I had been made an honorary member of the Lincoln Club on the East Side of New York—the other, when I had the long-desired opportunity to visit the city of Springfield, Illinois, and make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Abraham Lincoln.

It is a commonplace enough city, like many another in the great Mississippi Valley, but to me it was holy ground; there, where "Abraham Lincoln walks at midnight," I saw the house where he lived, read the tablets which mark the places where he practiced law, and then I went out to visit his tomb. Ornate it is, and too much so; nothing is there which interpreted to me his genius and character. There were many sightseers, who talked loudly and walked irreverently, where only a whisper should disturb the silence.

When they left (and I was thankful to see them go), convincing the guard that I meant no harm, I went close to the tomb, the stony bed in which our loved martyr sleeps, and the story of Uncle Joe passed through my

mind, with all that my knowing him had meant to me and the comrades of my youth. Placing a wreath upon the tomb in the name of the East Side Lincoln Club, I pledged to his country, which is ours, and to his cause, also ours, our loyalty and devotion forever.

Strange it seemed; yet why should it be strange? As I read the inscription carved in stone, the speech which I made at the burial of Russian Hill came back to me word for word, and I repeated it aloud. There was one sentence which I repeated three times:

"*With charity toward all, with malice toward none.*"

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